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## THE FORGOTTEN WAR – THE FIRST WORLD WAR IN CROATIA THROUGH COMMEMORATIVE PRACTICES<sup>1</sup>

**Abstract:** In this article, the authors explain, through several selected examples of commemorative practices, how the First World War in Croatia became a “forgotten war” despite the great sacrifices. Such events started being organized in honor of those who died in the First World War and they are still organised. These commemorative practices have not become traditional though.

**Keywords MeSH:** World War I, Croatia

**Non MeSH:** Commemorations, Forgotten war

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## Introduction

Every year, on 11<sup>th</sup> November the anniversary of the Armistice on the Western Front is celebrated, which is also considered the end of the First World War, at least in developed countries. In most countries, that day is a public holiday or the day for commemorating the victims of the war at the central monument or the cemetery of the victims of the First World War. Every November, at the Mirogoj cemetery in Zagreb near the Memorial Ossuary, delegations from the embassies of the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, Belgium, France, and Italy and, more recently, Bulgaria, traditionally lay wreaths as a sign of memory for those who died in the First World War, regardless of their religious or ethnic affiliation. Wreaths from the Ministry of Defense of the Republic of Croatia and the Hungarian Embassy have been laid at the same monument on All Saints' Day (1<sup>st</sup> November) for the past few years. On that day, there is no special commemoration, not even a notice in newspapers or portals about the commemoration of the Croatian soldiers who died in the First World War. Nothing strange or unusual for the Republic of Croatia because the last official state commemoration in which the head of state, the Government, the Parliament, representatives of Ministries and various embassies participated took place in 2018 when the Centenary of the end of the First World War was celebrated. After that, the First World War in Croatia again began to fall into oblivion, at least as far as the state institutions are concerned.[1 p255-276]

How has the First World War become a “forgotten war” in Croatia? It is a long-term process that started immediately after the end of the First World War and has continued all these years. The fact is that history, as well as commemorative practices, are kept in memory by the victors, and the soldiers of the Croatian troops, as the citizens of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, found themselves on the side of the losers after the end of the First World War. Despite the courage and victories that were achieved, the memory of Croatian military successes remained in the zone of “oblivion” because in the final defeat there are no laurels and glory, so the memory and mourning of the casualties in the lost war was held in a narrow circle of family or comrades.

The anniversaries of the First World War have been recorded in European and world historiography for decades, and these commemorative practices are at the center of research by numerous scientists. [2,3,4,5,6,7] Commemorative practices of the First World War have only recently been recorded in Croatian historiography. The historian V. Herman Kaurić [1,8] was the first one to deal with them; whereas other historians, Lj. Dobrovšak [9 p399-426, 10 p83-108, 11 p213-231] and Mislav Gabelica, [12 p241-267, 13 p391-420, 14 p77-107] only briefly touched on those topics while primarily dealing with a completely different theme. Therefore, it is rather challenging to talk about the commemoration and the culture of remembering the victims of the First World War in Croatia because the topic is still insufficiently researched. Nevertheless, following several fragmentary sources, we will analyze the outlines of the commemorative practices in Croatia that have been held for the victims of the First World War in the interwar period.

## Commemorative practices during the First World War

During the First World War, commemorative practices were performed by honoring the fallen soldiers at the military cemeteries, mostly on All Saints' Day and All Souls' Day (1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> November). The best example of this is the commemoration of the Day of Remembrance for the dead at the Mirogoj Cemetery in Zagreb. With the First World War outbreak, Zagreb became one of the numerous centers for caring for the wounded and sick soldiers brought from the battlefield, and some of them found their "eternal resting place" in Zagreb. The dead soldiers were mainly buried in the Mirogoj City Cemetery in Zagreb, and so far, there has been no evidence that they were buried anywhere else. [15 p123]

On the eve of the first Armistice Day, the administration of Mirogoj, in agreement with the City Administration, arranged the burial ground intended for the burial of the fallen soldiers, and new mounds sprung up day by day.[8 p256-260] All the graves were arranged in rows in the same line, all identical black mounds with identical black crosses.[15 p123] By November 1914, 60 soldiers and several officers who had died in numerous Zagreb civil and military hospitals and Red Cross hospitals were buried in Mirogoj. By the end of 1918, that number had grown to 3,697 soldiers. In the middle of the soldier's cemetery, a large ivy-wrapped wooden cross was placed in the center of a large earthen mound.[8 p256-257, 16,17] On All Saints' Day, at the foot of the cross was an inscription made of flowers, "Glory to the Fallen Heroes". At the bottom of the cross there were crossed rifles, sabres, and chakas, the common signs of the heroism and courage of fallen soldiers.[18 p1060]

In the first year of the war, the graves were decorated with wreaths for All Saints' Day. The people of Zagreb made a "pilgrimage" to the graves of the soldiers, as it was written in the newspapers of the time, "to bow to the shadow of the brave fighters, to bow their heads and pay respect to our glorious ones - for the king and the home of the fallen heroes." [19 p2] It should be noted that the graves of the enemy soldiers who had died in Zagreb as prisoners of war were also decorated on that occasion.[8 p256] In the first two years of the war, the members of the Croatian typographical singing society "Sloga" and the Croatian Peasant Singing Society "Podgorac" from Gračani performed lamentations at the mass grave for the fallen soldiers, accompanied by The Armed Forces Orchestra. In 1915, it was done by the members of the "Jednakost" singing society. In the following war years, only the Armed Forces Orchestra performed without any singing groups, significantly reducing their activity due to mobilization.[8 p257]

Military and civilian dignitaries participated in the mourning ceremonies on All Saints' Day, visiting military graves along with the bereaved families: Croatian ban Ivan Baron Skerlec, Archbishop of Zagreb Dr Antun Bauer, Commander of the XIII Military District Vice Marshal Gjuro Žunac, and Zagreb Mayor Janko Holjac.[20 p1083] Newspaper articles briefly described the commemorative practices performed by the military and civilian dignitaries. Thus, in an article in the National Gazette in 1915, it was stated that on All Saints' Day (the Day of the Dead) in the "field of the fallen heroes" at the foot of the central large wooden cross, there was an inscription made of flowers, "Glory to the Fallen Heroes", and at the foot of the cross a laurel-wreath with

Croatian tricolor was placed, signed by Ban Ivan Baron Skerlez. Along with the ban's wreath, there was also a wreath of officers and military officials of the joint army, laid by the Zagreb military command. To the right of the cross there was a wreath of the officers and military officials of the Home Guard, laid by the Home Guard of Croatian-Slavonian District in Zagreb.[21 p3]

At the same time, memorial masses for the fallen heroes were celebrated in parish churches throughout the city. In Zagreb, in the church of St. Blaža on All Souls' Day (2<sup>nd</sup> November), a "solemn mass for the fallen heroes" was celebrated, attended by the highest civilian representatives of the government and the military.[22 p3] These commemorative practices continued until the end of the First World War and afterwards, but with new army representatives.

### **Commemorative practices between the two world wars**

We cannot say that in the Kingdom of SHS/Yugoslavia, there was no commemoration or that the culture of remembering the soldiers who had died in the First World War was not fostered. As far as Croatia is concerned, this topic is still insufficiently researched, and so far, only fragments are known about the commemorative practices that took place between 1918 and 1941. As the newly created Kingdom of SHS/Yugoslavia consisted of both the victors and the vanquished, the commemoration of the war sufferings was diminished to the smallest possible measure. It was because the commemoration of certain battles presented the days of victory for some and the days of defeat for the others; nevertheless, for all of them, these were the days of great suffering and even greater human sacrifices. Until 1930, the focus of these commemorative activities in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia was located exclusively in Serbian lands,[23 p153-212, 24 p71, 25 p134-136, 26 p134-136] and since then, it has spread to Slovenia[25 p140-141] and Croatia. [27 p172, 25 p136, 28 p335]

When we talk about the state commemorative practices for the memory of the fallen soldiers in the First World War, 28<sup>th</sup> June, Vidovdan, was declared to be the day for the commemoration. Namely, the Ministry of Religion declared that on 30<sup>th</sup> July, 1919. It stated that "state and public holidays" throughout the Kingdom were to be held on Vidovdan, 28<sup>th</sup> June. It was supposed to be the day when "the memory of the fallen soldiers for faith and fatherland" was solemnly celebrated.[29 p1] This commemorative day was also confirmed by the Constitution of 1921. It also added the element of statehood to Vidovdan because it was decided that on that day all those who fell for the homeland were supposed to be commemorated in all churches in the country. Between the two wars, military parades, the Sokol festival (Ljubljana, Zagreb, Belgrade), air shows, horse races (Belgrade, Niš), torchlights and several other festivities were organized on that day. [30 p36-37]

Vidovdan as the "day of commemoration of the fallen soldiers in the war" was also confirmed in 1929, when King Alexander signed and put into force the Law on Public Holidays. The Law stated that according to § 5th on Vidovdan, in the houses of worship, "commemoration of the heroes who died in past wars" was to be celebrated. [31 p1884-1885] In the interwar period, the Vidovdan celebration was extended to im-

portant symbolic places for the new state. Those were Gazimestan (where the Battle of Kosovo took place), the Vrdnik monastery in Srem, where the “relics” of Prince Lazar were kept and where the Grand National Assembly was held after the commemoration of the fallen heroes at Kosovo Polje in Dalmatia.

An article in the Koprivnica newspaper *Demokrat* narrated the event. During Vidovdan celebration on June 18/29, 1919, the people were addressed with the words: “(...) if we are going to build columns for the Vidovdan temple, the temple of our new free future, we should, first of all, create a home, create homes for the orphans of those who died as sacrifices for liberation, because that is the only way we will enable those who died for our sake to continue to live.”[32 p3] As a matter of course, this article points the fact that the memory of those who died in the war as “victims for liberation” is cherished. Those who died wearing Austro-Hungarian uniforms were not considered.[25 p130] Likewise, from the numerous examples of national commemorations and celebrations for significant anniversaries, it is evident that only the heroism of Serbian soldiers and volunteers was glorified. Unlike the Austro-Hungarian army veterans, the Serbian army veterans had days when they could publicly express their suffering and sacrifice. Serbian soldiers who had laid down their lives wearing Austro-Hungarian or Bulgarian uniforms did not receive better treatment. No commemorative festivities were organized for them, nor were they remembered. They were relegated to collective oblivion like all other soldiers who had fought in Austro-Hungarian uniforms.[25 p135-137]

In addition to public holidays, different religious holidays were also official memorial days, depending on denomination. In Croatia, the religious holidays were All Saints' Day and All Souls' Day (1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> November). On those days, Croatian citizens traditionally visited the graves of the dead. At the same time, they commemorated those who had died in the First World War. In the 1921, according to “Instructions to the Clergy on Maintenance and Care of Soldiers' Graves”, one of the parish priests' obligations regarding the care of “warriors' graves” was “Cantillation of Soldiers' Graves”. [33 p1-2] According to that decree, pastors were obliged to go to cemeteries on Vidovdan and All Souls' Day “ on behalf of relatives and in the name of gratitude of the homeland and the Holy Mother of the Church to perform the cantillation of soldiers' graves according to the liturgical regulations on Catholic graves.”[33 p1-2] In addition to the mentioned public and religious holidays, commemorative practices and remembrance of those who had died in the First World War were also held in Croatia on 4<sup>th</sup> May. It was “War Orphans' Day”, i.e. the day of remembrance for “fallen brothers”. [34 p2-3] It is still unknown what those commemorative practices looked like and how systematically they were organized .

Since 1927, a memorial program, “Day of Silence”, has been held in Zagreb on November 11, organized by the Association for the League of Nations, i.e. the “Committee for the Celebration of the Day of Silence”, in commemoration of those who died in the First World War. The program began with a minute's silence at exactly 11:00 a.m. to honor those who had died in the war. The need for world peace was expressed, and a request was made to stop arming. [35 p7-8] In Zagreb were the best examples of how commemorative practices were performed. On the other hand, the way of hono-

ring those who died in the war in smaller towns or the countryside is still an entirely unexplored topic. It can be assumed that the parish priests followed the instructions mentioned above. However, very little was written about it in the newspapers. Only the anniversary of the breakthrough of the Salonika front was recorded in Koprivnica on 15<sup>th</sup> September, 1927. Afterwards, on the ninth anniversary of the breakthrough, divine services were held in all churches, when all reserve officers had to attend.[36 p3] When it was written about going to the cemetery for All Saints' Day, visiting the military cemetery was not mentioned in the newspapers, but only visiting the graves of "the loved ones".[27 p201, 37 p1-2, 38 p2, 39 p3]

Part of the commemorative ceremonies in Croatia also took place during the installation of monuments to the fallen soldiers in the First World War.[9 p399-426, 10 p83-108, 11p213-231] However, unlike other parts of Yugoslavia, there were only few of them in Croatia. The ceremony of the installation of monuments (commemorative plaques, crucifixes) involved locals, comrades, and, least of all, the official (civilian and military) authorities.[40 p41-62, 41 p3, 42 p3] One of the rare examples of commemorative practices in which civil, military and religious institutions participated in the interwar period was the setting up of the monuments to the martyred Jews in Zagreb (1930), Koprivnica (1934), and Križevci (1935).[43 p439-461, 44 p54-67]

In the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, some of more prominent commemorative practices of the commemoration of those who had died in the First World War were related to the erection of three monumental monuments. The two of them are situated in Serbia: the ossuary monument in Gučevo, the Monument to the Unknown Hero in Avala, and the one in Croatia (Mirogoj).

The memorial ossuary at Gučevo in Serbia is located in the vicinity of Crni Vrh, where fierce fighting took place in 1914. It contains the remains of Serbian and Austro-Hungarian soldiers who died during the Battle of Gučevo. The memorial pyramid with the ossuary was started by the Austro-Hungarian army for its fallen soldiers during the First World War, but it was not completed. The Association of Reserve Officers and Soldiers exhumed and buried 3,200 remains of Serbian soldiers in a joint ossuary, as well as the remains of members of the 52<sup>nd</sup> Zagreb Regiment, transferred from the cemetery in Bukovička Banja Park. The Monument was built in 1929 and dedicated in 1930.[45 p507-514, 46 p330-336] This Monument represented a kind of community because Serbian and Croatian soldiers were buried in the ossuary. The two nations fought against each other against their will, as presented to the public at that time. [24 p214] The second Monument is the "Monument to the Unknown Hero" in Avala, the Croatian sculptor Ivan Meštrović's work in collaboration with the architect Harold Biličić. King Aleksandar I Karađorđević personally initiated the construction of the monument. It was supposed to be dedicated to all the victims of the First World War. Nevertheless, the years (1912 - 1918) are written on the Monument, showing that the Monument is not only dedicated to the victims of the First World War but also to the victims Balkan wars. The Monument was built between 1934 and 1938 on the site of the medieval fortress Žrnov. The monumental caryatids symbolize not only the mothers of the fallen soldiers, but also the peoples and regions that made up the Kingdom of

Yugoslavia: Šumadija, Pannonia-Vojvodina, Kosovo, Dalmatia, Zagorje, Slovenia, and Macedonia. [47 p229-252, 48 p624-651, 26 p232-236]

This period's third significant war memorial was erected in Croatia at the Mirogoj cemetery in Zagreb. Although the plan was to construct a more monumental monument during the war, the construction did not occur. After the end of the war, no one took care of the military graves except the Society of Croatian Women or the relatives of the deceased soldiers, who decorated the graves on All Saints' Day. The initiative to build a common grave was introduced by the Social Department of the Zagreb City Government ten years after the end of the war in 1927. They decided to exhume the soldiers and transfer the remains to one grave. However, due to the sluggishness of the city and state apparatus, the work on the construction of the ossuary began in 1932 with the selection of a site and the announcement of a construction tender, which was won by the lesser-known Zagreb architect Ante Grgić. In 1931, the Association of Reserve Officers and Soldiers, a subcommittee in Zagreb, took the lead in the entire action, and the financing of the construction of the tomb was provided through the Mirogoj Foundation. The lower part of the tomb, the ossuary, was completed in 1934 when the exhumations were conducted. The outer part of the tomb without the Monument was completed in 1935. According to B. Kukić's research, about 2,800 Slavs and other nationalities, about 450 Hungarians and 110 Austrians were transferred to the ossuary. Due to the lack of financial resources in the city budget, no consideration was given to arranging the upper part of the tomb 1938, when a new tender for erecting the monument was announced. After having numerous financial and judicial doubts, the Pieta monument of the sculptor tandem Vanja Radauš and Jozo Turkalj was chosen. It was finally erected in March 1940, when the tomb was ceremonially presented to the public. [15 p123-125]

On 10<sup>th</sup> March, 1940, the year before the beginning of the Second World War, the "monument to the fallen and dead warriors" was officially unveiled. The Zagreb City Municipality and the Association of Reserve Officers of the Subcommittee in Zagreb supported it. The Monument was revealed in the presence of representatives of the military and civil authorities, numerous representatives of various organizations, representatives of all religions and the representative of His Majesty the King, Divisional General Marko Mihajlović. That was a rare example of the participation of civil and military authorities in commemorative ceremonies, but also of state institutions, although through a delegation rather than the personal presence of the highest officials. [49 p1-2]

### **Commemorative practices during the time of the Independent State of Croatia**

In the Independent State of Croatia (ISC), the regime change resulted in changes to the national ceremonial calendar. Church holidays remained non-working days. Instead of political holidays, new ones were introduced: 10<sup>th</sup> April as "ISC Foundation Day", then 13<sup>th</sup> June, the name day of Chief Ante Pavelić, and 20<sup>th</sup> June, "People's Victims' Day", i.e. the day when the representatives of the Croatian Peasant Party were

assassinated in 1928.[50 p53-72] In the first period after the establishment of the ISC, the culture of remembrance of the First World War and those who had died in it occupied a prominent place in the Croatian public space. The new regime began to create the cult of the Croatian warrior. For that purpose, it reached out to the heritage of the First World War, [12 p241-267] and the commemoration of its victims also began. [51 p8, 52 p9]

Before long, the Memorial Day for the Croatian Home Guards who had died in the First World War was introduced. It was set on 29<sup>th</sup> July, in memory of the bloody battle of the Austro-Hungarian troops with the Russians near Snyatin near Uscia above Prut. The battle was fought at the end of July 1917, and the 25<sup>th</sup> Zagreb Home Guard Infantry Regiment took part, among others. The Memorial Day was taken over from the existing Society of Reserve Officers of the 25<sup>th</sup> Home Guard Infantry Regiment, founded in 1923. For them, the mentioned day was a private commemorative day of the society, marked by the officers' participation in that battle.[12 p254]

Very swiftly, the scale of events important to the ISC began to change so that the First World War began to occupy a secondary position. As the Second World War progressed, the legacy of the First World War began to fade, and the central focus was on building the cult of Croatian warriors, heroes and martyrs in the Second World War. As it seems, the commemoration of the fallen soldiers in the First World War stopped in 1942. [12 p254-255]

### **Commemorative practices from 1945 to the present**

After 1945, the most basic facts about the causes, occasion and course of the First World War were taught. The Croats were only briefly mentioned within the Austro-Hungarian military forces. Some commemorative practices should not be even mentioned.

Since 2000, the situation in Croatia has changed a little, especially when we talk about the First World War and the participation of the Croats in it. On the 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the beginning of the war, two thematic issues of the Croatian Review magazine were published in 2004. It was followed by the exhibition named *I Gave Gold for Iron - Croatia in the First World War (Dadoh zlato za željezo - Hrvatska u Prvom svjetskom ratu)* in 2006-2007 accompanied with the published catalogue. On the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of Svetozar Boroević, an exhibition was set up, and an international scientific colloquium was organized in his hometown of Mečenčani. At the end of 2008, on the 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of the Great War, two gatherings dedicated to the First World War were held in Matica Hrvatska and the Croatian Institute of History. There were assumptions that it was only the beginning of cultivating a culture of remembrance in Croatia for the First World War. However, it did not happen, not even when the commemoration of the centenary of the Great War was coming closer. [1 p257-258]

Croatian institutions failed in this matter because they did not see any need and did not express their willingness to participate in any project that was proposed to them by various associations and institutions in the country and abroad. Finally, in



2013, the Government of the Republic of Croatia established the Commission for the Coordination of the First World War Centenary. It still exists today, at least formally, because it has not been dissolved, and its activities are almost unknown. Since the Republic of Croatia did not allocate the budget for commemorating the centenary of the First World War, as it was the case in some countries, it was partly budgeted from the Ministry of Culture, trying to realize some programs related to the commemoration of the Centenary through museums and galleries. All other programs of public, cultural and scientific institutions were individual attempts to mark the Centenary in some way. In May 2014, an international scientific conference *Commemorating 1914 – Exploring the War’s Legacies* was held in Zagreb, which brought together 23 eminent scientists. One of them was the Australian historian Christopher Clark. The Croatian state institutions considered it to be quite enough. However, more formal commemoration and central marking of the Centenary at the Mirogoj cemetery in Zagreb near the central monument to those who had died in the First World War was considered after certain associations kept on pressurizing. It was then realized that the inscription set in 1994 “to the fallen Croatian soldiers in the First World War” did not correspond to the truth. The memorial ossuary contains the remains of 3,300 participants in the war (Hungarians, Germans and others), approximately one-third of whom are the Croats. [1 p259-264]

The commemoration of the Centenary of the First World War began on 27<sup>th</sup> June, 2014, with the laying of a wreath at the Mirogoj memorial ossuary. The wreath was jointly laid by the representative of the President of the Republic of Croatia, the representative of the President of the Croatian Parliament, the representative of the Prime Minister, the Minister of Defense, and the Deputy Minister of Culture. The commemoration was remarkably similar to the one that had occurred 74 years earlier when the monument was erected. There were not any main representatives, only their deputies. The program continued at the commemoration held in the Croatian State Archives. Once again, there were a considerable number of diplomatic and political deputies. The exception was the President of the Republic of Croatia, Ivo Josipović, who held an appropriate speech and then left for Sarajevo. In defense of Croatian politicians, it should be mentioned that all prominent politicians or public figures were already in Sarajevo, where the central European commemoration was held. Nevertheless, this would not have happened if preparations had started earlier. In this way, even though the state institutions failed in commemorative practices, numerous citizens and enthusiasts of that association understood the importance of the Centenary. This event was accompanied by numerous exhibitions in local museums, international conferences organized in institutes, and multiple books, catalogues, and scientific articles were published. Thanks to them the centenary celebration was relatively successful. [1 p264-266]

The commemoration of the centenary of the beginning of the First World War in Croatia was mainly prompted by the actions of foreign institutions or states. The same pattern was followed when it came to marking the end of the First World War. On 11<sup>th</sup> November, 2018, before the usual commemoration of foreign delegations at Zagreb’s Mirogoj cemetery, a solemn mass was held in the Zagreb Cathedral on the occa-

sion of the end of the war. This time, the mass was attended by the Prime Minister of the Republic of Croatia, the President of the Parliament, ambassadors, military attachés of numerous countries, representatives of religious communities and other guests, as well as the envoy of the President of the Republic of Croatia, since the President was at the time in France for the central world commemoration of the end of the First World War. That officially completed the role of state Croatian institutions and their representatives in commemorating the First World War. [1 p267]

Apart from Mirogoj, the commemoration of the centenary of the end of the First World War was also held in some smaller towns where war cemeteries were located. Thus, at the former war cemetery in Varaždin, the representatives of the highest state institutions, the President, the Parliament and the Government paid their respects to the fallen soldiers. That was also done by the representatives of the Ministry of Defense, Culture and Veterans, the representatives of the local authorities of Varaždin County, veterans of the Croatian War of Independence, veterans associations, and numerous citizens. [1 p267-268]

## Conclusion

Since the First World War in Croatia is largely suppressed from collective memory, there is no tradition in its commemoration despite the vigorous efforts of individuals and some citizen associations, such as The 1914-1918 Association, to restore the memory of it. The First World War in Croatia remains a “forgotten war”. It will remain so until the state, civil and military institutions fully engage in commemorative practices at the national level. By not participating in cultivating the culture of memory of the victims of that war, that war will eventually disappear from the historical memory of the nation. It is pushed into the sphere of family memory. In addition, numerous myths related to it are created that are difficult to eradicate. Those myths harm the formation of state unity, which is essential for the state which was created not so long ago. It is indisputable that the Croats fought for their home and homeland during the First World War, whatever one may think about it. Moreover, with all its controversies, the history of the First World War is part of Croatian military history. Although they had the misfortune of finding themselves on the defeated side, numerous known and unknown heroes showed their humanity. The military casualties were not minor. For many, neither the name nor the grave is known, which is the right of every human being. In the end, we can only agree with the unknown author in the text “Let’s Erect Monuments to our Heroes”, published in the National Gazette in 1916, where it is written: “By celebrating our heroes, we celebrate our history, our past, on which we must build the future”.

## Rezime

U ovom članku autorice kroz nekoliko izdvojenih primjera komemorativnih praksi objašnjavaju kako je Prvi svjetski rat u Hrvatskoj unatoč velikim žrtvama po-

stao „zaboravljeni rat“. Te priredbe organizirane su u čast poginulih u Prvom svjetskom ratu počevši od 1914., pa sve do danas, ali nisu postale tradicionalne.

Budući da je Prvi svjetski rat u Hrvatskoj većim dijelom potisnut iz kolektivne memorije, nema tradicije u njegovom obilježavanju unatoč silnim naporima pojedinaца i nekim udrugama građana, poput Udruge 1914-1918., da obnove sjećanje na njega. Prvi svjetski rat u Hrvatskoj ostaje i dalje „zaboravljen rat“, sve dok se državne, civilne i vojne institucije ne uključe u komemorativne prakse na nacionalnom nivou i shvate da svojim neuključivanjem u njegovanje kulture sjećanja na stradale u tom ratu, taj rat nestaje iz povijesnog sjećanja nacije i gura se u sferu obiteljskog sjećanja. Osim toga, oko njega se stvaraju brojni mitovi teško iskorjenjivi, a štetni za formiranje državnog jedinstva, važnoga u ne tako davno stvorenoj državi. Neosporna je činjenica je da su se Hrvati za vrijeme Prvoga svjetskoga rata borili za svoj dom i za svoju domovinu, što god tko mislio o njoj, te da je povijest Prvoga svjetskoga rata sa svim svojim kontraverzama dio hrvatske vojne povijesti. Iako su imali nesreću da se nađu na poraženoj strani, iz njihovih su redova potekli brojni znani i neznani junaci, koji su se istakli svojim čovječnošću. Vojničke žrtve nisu bile male, a mnogima se ne zna ni ime niti grob, na što svaki čovjek ima pravo. Na kraju se možemo samo složiti s nepoznatim autorom u tekstu „Dižimo spomenike našim junacima“ objavljenim u *Narodnim novinama* 1916. godine, gdje stoji: *Slaveći svoje junake, slavimo svoju povijest, svoju prošlost, na kojoj moramo da gradimo budućnost.*

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