

Identity Construction and State Loyalties of Otmar Babić

S. Cvikić

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This paper provides a study case of the First World War Croatian Major General Otmar Babić. It investigates the post-First World War national identity construction and shifting state loyalties of this Austro-Hungarian high-ranking military official in three different state regimes: the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes / Kingdom of Yugoslavia, and Independent State of Croatia. In view of the limited scope of this paper, the presented preliminary findings are narrowly focused on the text — on Otmar Babić's statements in various types of narrations. His personal records are treated as narrations that belong to the historization of warfare experience — a military history from below. Therefore, this micro-level sociological study has analyzed developed discourse and discursive practices reflected in the correspondence between Major General Babić and state institutions, and his private, more intimate, writings expressed in poetry. Otmar Babić's statements have been analyzed and treated as social representations expressed in discourse about the impact of the First World War on his life. Foucauldian discourse analysis applied as methodology has therefore, enabled to do qualitative sociological research into the shifting nature of Otmar Babić's identity construction in different state regimes, as well as into his shifting state loyalties after the First World War when he was retired. Otmar Babić's case provides a subjective account of the military past and post-war life and represents a source of First World War history from a personal perspective and a true testimony to the long lost Croatian cultural memory.

Keywords: Otmar Babić, shifting state loyalties, national identity formation, post-First World War period.

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В статье представлено исследование отдельных этапов биографии хорватского генерал-майора времен Первой мировой войны Отмара Бабича. Анализируется конструкция национальной идентичности после Первой мировой войны и изменение политической лояльности этого австро-венгерского высокопоставленного военного чиновника в трех разных государственных образованиях: Австро-Венгерской монархии, Королевстве сербов, хорватов и словенцев, Королевстве Югославия и Независимом государстве Хорватия. Ввиду ограниченного объема статьи предварительные выводы были узко ориентированы на высказывания Отмара Бабича, представленные в текстах различного типа. Его личные записи рассматривались как повествования, относящиеся к историзации военного опыта — описанию военной истории снизу. В ходе данного социологического исследования на микроуровне проанализированы развитый дискурс и дискурсивные практики в переписке генерал-майора Бабича с государственными институтами и в его частных, более интимных, поэтических сочинениях. Деятельность Бабича изучалась не просто как дискурсивная практика. Более важно то, что его высказывания исследовались и трактовались как социальные репрезентации влияния Первой мировой войны на его жизнь. Таким образом, прикладной анализ дискурса М. Фуко в качестве методологии позволил провести качественное социологическое исследование изменчивой природы конструкции идентичности Отмара Бабича при различных государственных режимах, а также его меняющейся политической лояльности после Первой мировой войны, когда он был на пенсии. Дело Отмара Бабича, являющееся источником сведений по истории Первой мировой войны с его личной точки зрения, представляет собой субъективные описания военного прошлого и послевоенной жизни, будучи подлинным свидетельством хорватской культурной памяти.

Ключевые слова: Отмар Бабич, изменение политической лояльности, формирование национальной идентичности, период после Первой мировой войны.

Introduction

After the Centennial Commemoration of the end of the First World War in 2018, initially modest public and scholarly interests for the subject in Croatia according to Vijoleta Herman Kaurić have greatly improved since she made her first bibliography of Croatian scientific publications about the First World War¹. Close inspection of this bibliography shows that most of the articles were about economic and political issues related to the First World War and only 10 about military history and Croatian participation in the Austro-Hungarian army and warfare. Kaurić's recent bibliography² of publications on the

¹ This bibliography contains articles published in Croatian historical journals in the period 1945–1998. For detailed insight into the list see: *Herman Kaurić V. Bibliografija radova o Prvom svjetkom ratu objavljenim u historijskim časopisima u razdoblju 1945–1998. godine // Radovi Zavoda za hrvatsku povijest Filozofskog fakulteta Sveučilišta u Zagrebu. 1999–2000. Vol. 32–33. Str. 491–498.*

² *Herman Kaurić V. Bibliografija izdanja o Prvom svjetskom ratu 1999–2019 // Radovi Zavoda za hrvatsku povijest Filozofskog fakulteta Sveučilišta u Zagrebu. 2020. Vol. 52. Br. 2. Str. 347–392.*

First World War produced in Croatia twenty years later testify to a revival of public and academic attention to Croatian First World War legacy and history. This bibliography covers the period between 1999 and 2019 and lists 23 international publications translated into Croatian Language, 12 handbooks (manuals, lexicons, guidebooks), 29 books as historical sources of evidence and archival resources, 65 exhibition catalogues, 71 scientific studies, 14 conference books of proceedings, 21 special editions of journals, and 326 scholarly articles³. The number of publications⁴ on military history has increased over time even though, as indicated by Herman Kaurić, there is still room for improvement⁵. Croatian historiography of the First World War therefore has expanded its scope of research, methodologies, and theories, but still struggles to define the boundaries of scholarly disciplines and balances between interdisciplinarity (trans-disciplinarity and multi-disciplinarity), fragmentation and specialization. Following F. Hameršak's attempt to provide an insight into the autobiography of individual confrontations with war troubles, political and social issues of painful ideological transformation of the Croatian society during and after the First World War, this paper contributes to the study of personal accounts of the First World War and presents still under researched study case of Major General Otmar Babić in Croatian military history.

The First World War history that emerges from Croatian individual post-war reminiscence and collective memory of war veterans, such as Otmar Babić, in this paper is researched from a post-modernist standpoint and its results are presented in critical manner. This is done in line with F. Hameršak's⁷ claims that in Croatian case, the post-modernist research of humanities and social sciences involves venturing into uncharted territory of neglected, restricted, under researched and deeply repressed histories of those who were silenced by the violence, repression, and war of the 20th Century. Therefore, an insight is gained into the neglected Croatian history, memory, experience (individual and collective), and violence of the First World War, against still limited⁸ scope of the research done by contemporary sociology of war in Croatia⁹. Interpretation of sociological research findings in this paper is grounded in Ozren Žunec's understanding of sociology of war and Clausewitz's theory¹⁰. Ozren Žunec claims that "war" as a concept derives directly from intimate and historically mediated experience of the battlefield¹¹, while the empirics come from the lived and experienced rather than from abstract theory. So, when he juxtaposes Clausewitz's understanding of war with his theoretical deliberations, Ozren Žunec still remains firmly grounded in the sociology of war and considers war to be a

³ *Herman Kaurić V. Bibliografija izdanja o Prvom svjetskom ratu 1999–2019. Str. 348.*

⁴ There is also a bibliography of published works that cover local histories. See: *Marojević T. Vinkovci u Velikom ratu, Bibliografski prilog istraživanju, Zbornik radova Vinkovački kraj u Velikom ratu (1914–1918). Vinkovci, 2016. Str. 43–76.*

⁵ *Herman Kaurić V. Bibliografija izdanja o Prvom svjetskom ratu 1999–2019. Str. 349.*

⁶ *Hameršak F. Tamna strana Marsa. Hrvatska autobiografija i Prvi svjetski rat. Zagreb, 2013. Str. 19.*

⁷ *Ibid. Str. 17.*

⁸ *Shaw M. Dialectics of War. An Essay in the Social Theory of Total War and Peace. London, 2010. P. 6–18.*

⁹ Even though he did not focus most of his research on the First World War warfare, work of Croatian sociologist Ozren Žunec is a notable exception in Croatian scholarship.

¹⁰ *Žunec O. Pruski generalštab i počeci sociologije // Revija za sociologiju. 1996. Vol. 27. Br. 1–2. Str. 3–19.*

¹¹ *Ibid. Str. 14.*

“social fact”¹² — a fact that implies a whole range of variables related to social issues and human interactions¹³. Even though extrapolation of Croatia’s First World War social dynamics is far beyond the scope of this paper, it is nonetheless worth mentioning that the warfare of such global scale was an unprecedented experience for Croatian participants who in the end were stripped of every meaning and reason as war veterans that could justify their military defeat and status in the victorious Serbian-led Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes/Kingdom of Yugoslavia¹⁴. Social dynamics of the Croatian postwar society was therefore, according to J. P. Newman conditioned by the First World War context of international power politics, bargains and tradeoffs whose military and political impact on individuals and Croatian nation as a whole produced coerced dependency on South Slavs’ state unification¹⁵.

Therefore, this paper provides a study case of Croatian Major General Otmar Babić aiming to extend the scope of initial studies¹⁶ and to investigate the post-First World War national identity construction and shifting state loyalties of Croatian high-ranking army officials inside three state regimes: the Austro-Hungarian Monarch, the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes/Kingdom of Yugoslavia, and the Independent State of Croatia. An extensive personal archive (State Archive in Vukovar) of this under-researched Croatian Major General provides a valuable insight into the education, training, and career of an officer of the Austro-Hungarian army, as well as into his war experiences, retirement and life as a former Croatian high-ranking army official in the changed socio-political circumstances after the war under different state regimes. Even though this micro-level sociological study analyzes developed discourse and discursive practices in Otmar Babić’s diaries and notebooks, it also focuses on his intimate writings expressed in poetry and on his correspondence with state institutions and veterans’ organizations/associations. The application of Foucauldian type¹⁷ of critical discourse analysis as a post-modernist methodology thus enables to study Otmar Babić’s national identity construction in relation to state regimes’ attitudes towards Croatian war veterans in three different states. Hereby, the study traces his divergent notions and perceptions of constructed and deconstructed state loyalties under various regimes. The way in which Major General Babić’ language appropriates discourse (discursive practices) of power relations is compared to the prevailing power relations stipulated by the old and new state regime institutions reflected in the official correspondence with him. The initial research findings indicate a shift-

¹² Ibid. Str. 15.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Cvikić S., *Dobrovšak Lj.* Croatian Interwar Cultural Memory and Disabled War Veterans // Vestnik of Saint Petersburg University. History. 2021. Vol. 66, issue 1. P. 193–211.

¹⁵ Newman J.P.: 1) Croats and Croatia in the Wake of the Great War // Transactions of the Royal Historical Society. 2014. Vol. 24. P. 165–181; 2) Yugoslavia in the Shadow of War. Veterans and the Limits of State Building 1903–1945. Cambridge, 2015.

¹⁶ Preliminary research findings of this paper were presented at the conference in St Petersburg, Russia: International Conference: Empires, territorial states and local communities in ethnic and national dimensions (3–4 February 2022) under the title “Stuck in Between Lost Empire and Assimilated Croatian Nation — Major General Otmar Babić in Croatian 1st WW Memory Culture”.

¹⁷ Cvikić S., *Dobrovšak Lj.* Croatian Interwar Cultural Memory and Disabled War Veterans. P. 193–211. — Since this type of qualitative methodology belongs to the sociology of knowledge approach to discourse, readers are advised to also consult collection of papers edited by R. Keller, A. K. Hornidge and W. J. Schunemann. See: The Sociology of Knowledge Approach to Discourse. Investigating the Politics of Knowledge and Meaning-Making / eds R. Keller, A. K. Hornidge, W. J. Schunemann. London; New York, 2018.

ing nature of Otmar Babić's identity construction inside the Austro-Hungarian Army as high-ranking military official next to his shifting state loyalties as a civilian after the First World War during his retirement in the new Yugoslav regime. Namely, shifting dynamics of the Croatian national identity construction inside various state regimes was closely related to the loyalties to new and old regimes, thus leaving Croatian war veterans, such as General Major Babić, marginalized in the post-First World War no-man's-land — stuck in between lost monarchy and assimilated Croatian nation. This, however, all changed for Otmar Babić and his fellow comrades when they were recognized as Croatian First World War veterans by a new state regime of Independent State of Croatia right before his death in 1943 (age 81).

In subsequent sections this paper will first introduce a personal archive of Major General Otmar Babić as a primary source of data used in the qualitative sociological analysis. Then, it will outline the secondary source of data, Otmar Babić's researched biographies inside Croatian First World War military history available in scholarly and professional publications. Foucauldian discourse analysis as methodology and post-modernist theoretical framework already established in the previous study by Sandra Cvikić and Ljiljanja Dobrovšak, will be used and extended in the study case of Major General Otmar Babić and will not be discussed in detail but applied similarly to the initial study¹⁸. Other sections then provide research findings based on conceptual analysis and interpretations that describe and define national identity construction and shifting state loyalties of Croatian high-ranking army officials exemplified by Major General Otmar Babić. The established relationship between two poles — the national identity and state loyalty will indicate how and to what extent it was possible to construct/adjust one's life against the background of different state regimes and experiences of war. In conclusion, the paper provides evidence about the shifting nature of national identity construction and state loyalties of a high-ranking Croatian military official in three state regimes: the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, and the Independent State of Croatia. This, however, shows to what extent high ranking Croatian military officials¹⁹ of the Austro-Hungarian army, including Otmar Babić, were in the aftermath of the First World War coerced into the silent historical oblivion of existential survival and disengaged from meaningful creation and development of indigenous post-war cultural memory.

The primary source of data in this qualitative sociological research is Otmar Babić's personal archive stored in the Vukovar State Archive²⁰ which includes the following: diaries and collections of poetry; notebooks about housekeeping/everyday expenses and personal budget maintenance; official military state documents and correspondence (war

¹⁸ Cvikić S., Dobrovšak Lj. Croatian Interwar Cultural Memory and Disabled War Veterans. P. 196–200.

¹⁹ Even the most pronounced representative of Croatian high-ranking military officials in the Austro-Hungarian Army, Svetozar Borojević is also under-researched. Exhibition about Borojević's life and military career organized in 2006 by the Croatian State Archive in Zagreb (Anniversary of his 150th birthday) indicates not only how little is known about this historical figure, but also about other Croatian high-ranking military officials who participated in the First World War (some are mentioned in this publication). See M. Pojić catalogue: Vojskovođa Svetozar Borojević. 1856–1920. Available at: http://www.arhiv.hr/Portals/0/Novosti/KATALOG_BOROEVIC.pdf (accessed: 08.07.2022).

²⁰ See official registry of archive funds (*Vodič kroz arhivsko gradivo Državnog arhiva u Vukovaru*): <https://www.davu.hr/index.php/arhivsko-gradivo/vodic-fondova-davu> (accessed: 21.01.022). Because Otmar Babić's archival material was not duly processed and arranged by the Vukovar State Archive, referenced texts from this file were mentioned without individual signifiers. The Vienna State Archive also holds a file about Otmar Babić, which was unavailable to the author due to COVID pandemic.

records, retirement records, honorary commendations); personal correspondence (letters sent to different persons/institutions); notebooks about his military studies; and notebooks about his battles and warfare strategy. Most of the material is written in the German language and script, and to a lesser degree — in the Croatian language and script, with few official documents written in Serbian and Cyrillic script²¹. Close review of the material shows that Otmar Babić was, due to his international military education and training, equally proficient in German and Croatian, while for official state documents written in Serbian and Cyrillic script, he needed translation²². Apart from this under-researched archival fonds on Otmar Babić, additional sources of data about his life and military career pertain to works of professional and enthusiast local historians, such as Ivan Ćosić Bukvin²³. So far, the author of this paper has been able to identify only one mention of Otmar Babić in official historical publications, namely, just a mention of his name by historian Dr. S. Pavičić in his list of Croatian generals in the Austro-Hungarian Army and in the list of those who participated in the First World War²⁴. In addition to S. Pavičić's list²⁵, there is a work by a local enthusiast historian Ivan Ćosić Bukvin²⁶ who provides a short biography of Otmar Babić in his article depicting Croatian military officials that come from Eastern Croatian regions of Slavonia, Baranja, and Srijem²⁷, in particular, from the vicinity of the Bosut river²⁸ that were in service of the Habsburg family. It can be inferred from this short biography that the source of information was indeed Otmar Babić's personal records kept in the Vukovar State Archive, and I. Ć. Bukvin gives only basic facts about his life: when and where he was born, where and when he died, his military rank and postings. Even though most of Otmar Babić's records were handwritten by him in German, which makes it difficult to decipher, the author of this paper was able to partially translate it and reconstruct Otmar Babić's biography from the official Austro-Hungarian records (forms) and those of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes/Yugoslavia, as well as from various documents belonging to the period of Independent State of Croatia. The collected data was nonetheless sufficient for the initial study of Otmar Babić's documents, correspondence, and poems.

²¹ This paper rests its sociological analysis predominantly on texts written in Croatian and Serbian, and to a lesser degree on those written in German language. Texts in German were translated either by the author of this paper, or by Pater Prior Henrik Damjanović (Zisterzienserabtei, Wettingen-Mehrerau, Bregenz).

²² See: BABIĆ, Otmar, general (Vukovar, 18.VIII.1911. — Zagreb, 9.IV.2000) — Vukovar; 1952/2002; kut. 154; 14.4 d/m. AP., K. VLASTELINSKI, OBITELJSKI I OSOBNI ARHIVSKI FONDOVI, K. 3. Osobni arhivski fondovi, *Državni savet Kraljevine Srba, Hrvata i Slovenaca*, Br. 13769./25. 17. Juna 1925. godine Beograd.

²³ See his published article entitled "Visoki vojni časnici s prostora međubosuča u službi carske kuće Habsburg (1608–1918)". Available at: <http://library.foi.hr/m3/casview.aspx?sql=SDCD-D2Y2DD9Y36-37-DDD-SSDD75> (accessed: 14.04.2022).

²⁴ Pavičić S. Hrvatska vojna i ratna poviest i Prvi svjerski rat. Zagreb, 1943. Str. 704–705.

²⁵ Namely, there are few biographical annotations about Otmar Babić made in the publication that list prominent members of the Vinkovci society. See: Šalić T. Vinkovački leksikon. Vinkovci, 2007. Str. 38.

²⁶ Ćosić B. I. Visoki vojni časnici s prostora Međbosuča u službi carske kuće Habsburg (1608–1918) // Godišnjak Njemačke narodnosne zajednice = VDG. 2009. Jahrbuch. Vol. 16. Str. 331–350.

²⁷ For detailed information on the Croatian experience of the First World War in Vinkovci region, see: Prutki S. Srijem u Prvom svjetskom ratu 1914–1918: zbornik radova sa znanstvenoga skupa 9. lipnja 2015. Vukovar, 2016.

²⁸ He mentions the following military officials, providing short descriptions of their careers: Josip Šokčević (Vinkovci, 1811. — Beč, 1896.), Marijan Varešanin von Vareš (Gunja, 1847. — Beč, 1917.), and Kuzman Bogutovac (Bošnjaci, 1816. — Slavonski Brod, 1880.).

In his membership application form²⁹ filled on May 1, 1942 (Fig. 1), Otmar Babić stated that he was born on November 16, 1861³⁰, in Haselbach (Leskovac), Gurkfeld, Kranjska. Both his father and grandfather were also military officials³¹ in the same army³². He indicated his homeland (“zavičajnost”)³³ as Croatia (“Vinkovci, Hrvatska”) and religious denomination (“vjeroispovjest”) as Roman Catholic³⁴. Under the section class/social standing (“stališ”)³⁵ Otmar Babić wrote that he was a retired general of the former Austro-Hungarian Army (“General u m. bivše austro-ugarske Monarhije”), and that he was single (bachelor) without any assets (“imućstveno stanje”) having a permanent residence in Vinkovci. He also stated that he did not have an occupation, only the former military rank (General Major) in the infantry military service, thus listing the military decorations for his outstanding achievements during the First World War.

Further on, the official state document from the welfare office in Zagreb from September 6, 1920 (Fig. 2), states that Otmar Babić gained the rank of Lieutenant Colonel on August 18, 1884, and the rank of Major General — in 1918³⁶. The same document states that he served five war years in the Austro-Hungarian army (1914, 1915, 1916, 1917, and 1918) and that from November 3, 1918, he did not serve in the newly formed army of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes/Kingdom of Yugoslavia: “nije bio na dužnosti u našoj vojsci”. Furthermore, he was not admitted to this newly formed army and was retired by the Decree F. A. B. (“stanje postaja”) 16.249 from May 12, 1922.

²⁹ Otmar Babić had been a member of the Officers’ House of Vinkovci („Oficirski dom Vinkovci”) since 1924. See: BABIĆ, Otmar, general (Vukovar, 18.VIII.1911. — Zagreb, 9.IV.2000) — Vukovar; 1952/2002; kut. 154; 14,4 d/m. AP, K. VLASTELINSKI, OBITELJSKI I OSOBNI ARHIVSKI FONDOVI, K. 3. Osobni arhivski fondovi, *Otmar Babić General u penziji 25. jula 1925. Vinkovci. Oficirski Dom — Vinkovci.*

³⁰ However, he made a spelling mistake, instead of 1861 he wrote down 1961.

³¹ This is also confirmed by Ivan Čosić Bekavac’s short biography of Otmar Babić, where he states that family Babić comes from the village Račinovci. See: Čosić B. I. Visoki vojni časnici s prostora međubosuča u službi carske kuće Habsburg (1608–1918) // Hrašće časopis za književnost umjetnost kulture i povijest. 2009. Vol. 36–37. Str. 83.

³² This must have been one of the reasons for his acceptance at the military academy in Vienna, which for Croats was extremely difficult to enter in his time if a candidate did not have financial means or family military legacy and good connections. An excellent description of conditions and requirements for candidates in the Austro-Hungarian army is provided by Tado Oršolić. See: Oršolić T. O časničkoj izobrazbi, plaći i časničkom kadru u Austrougarskoj vojsci s naglaskom na Dalmaciju // Zavod za povijesne znanosti HAZU u Zadru. 2006. Vol. 48. Str. 557–568.

³³ For more information on how Croatian citizenship was legally recognized after Austro-Hungarian Monarchy’s dissolution, see: Kosnica I. Definiranje državljanstskog korpusa na hrvatsko-slavonskom području u Kraljevini SHS/Jugoslaviji // Zbornik Pravnog fakulteta Sveučilišta u Rijeci. 2018. Vol. 39. Br. 2. Sr. 809–832.

³⁴ However, another official document issued by the Vienna Military Archive provides somewhat different personal information about Otmar Babić. According to the copy of the General Land Registers’ Sheet (“Abschrift. Hauptgrundbuchsblatt”) Otmar Babić was born in the place called Haselback bei Gurkfeld, in the County Gurkfeld in the Krain land. It also states that Otmar Babić’s homeland is the land of Slavonia (“Slavonien”), district Breeder, place of Vinkovci. Otmar Babić completed his military education and training in Vienna Neustadt Military Academy.

³⁵ According to the Croatian language Portal (Hrvatski jezični portal), a definition of this archaic term is translated into the concept that refers to class/social standing. See: https://hjp.znanje.hr/index.php?show=search_by_id&id=d1tmURM%3D&keyword=stali%25%A1 (accessed: 14.03.2022).

³⁶ BABIĆ, Otmar, general (Vukovar, 18.VIII.1911. — Zagreb, 9.IV.2000) — Vukovar; 1952/2002; kut. 154; 14,4 d/m. AP, K. VLASTELINSKI, OBITELJSKI I OSOBNI ARHIVSKI FONDOVI, K. 3. Osobni arhivski fondovi, *Povjereništvo za socijalnu skrb, Dosje V u Zagrebu, Ilica 10, Broj 22479. Poreznom uredu prepis, Vinkovci.*

Pristupnica

Kao kandidate član

Pristupam u »Društvo odlikovanih ratnika Hrvata iz god. 1914.—1918.« u Zagrebu i obvezujem se pokoravati poznatim mi pravilima, poslovniku i zaključcima društvenog odbora i skupštine, te savjesno vršiti sve članske dužnosti. Izjavljujem pod svim posljedicama zakonske odgovornosti, da su niže navedeni podaci istiniti.

(Moli se čitljivo ispuniti)

1. Prezime i ime: Babić Otmar
 2. Ime oca: Antun
 3. Dan, mjesec i godina rođenja: 16. studeni 1961
 4. Rodno mjesto (općina, kotar i zemlja): Havelbach (Čestkovač) Kraljevska Slovenija
Šentfeld
 5. Zavičajnost: Vinkovci Hrvatska
 6. Vjeroispovijest: rimo-katolik
 7. Stališ: General u m. bivše austro-ugarske Monarhije
 8. Obiteljsko stanje: neženjen
 9. Imućstveno stanje: bez imetka
 10. Stalno boravište: Vinkovci
 11. Zanimanje (u građ. životu ili u djelatnoj voj. službi): bez zanimanja
 12. Naročita sposobnost (sprema) u gospodarskoj, tehničkoj i vojničkoj potrebi, kao: vinogradar, graditelj vodenih pogona, pilot motorist i t. d.: bezposoban
 13. Čin, kojega je imao ili ga ima u vojsci: Generalmajor
 14. Rod vojske kod kojega je služio ili služi: Gesadje
 15. Eventualne tjelesne mane posljedice rata: /
 16. Popis primljenih odlikovanja: L. O., E. R. O., P. O. (Grača Kruša) — 16. 11. 19. A. H. O. u. o. b.
 17. Gdje ih je stekao i zašto (kojom prigodom): U svjetskom ratu 1914—1918.
18. Je li bio ranjen i koliko puta: / Okreni!

Vlastoručni potpis:

U Vinkovcima dne 4. svibnja 1942
Otmar Babić general u m.

Potpis dvojice članova s brojem njihovih iskaznica:

Primljen na sjednici odbora, dne _____
Brisan uslijed: _____
Bilješke: _____

Fig. 1. The photo of the document stored in Vukovar State Archive — Application form for the membership in Association of Decorated Croatian Warriors in Years 1914–1918 [BABIĆ, Otmar, general (Vukovar, 18.VIII.1911. — Zagreb, 9.IV.2000) — Vukovar; 1952/2002; kut. 154; 14,4 d/m. AP, K. VLASTELINSKI, OBITELJSKI I OSOBNI ARHIVSKI FONDOVI, K.3. Društvo odlikovanih ratnika Hrvata iz god. 1914–1918. Pristupnica]

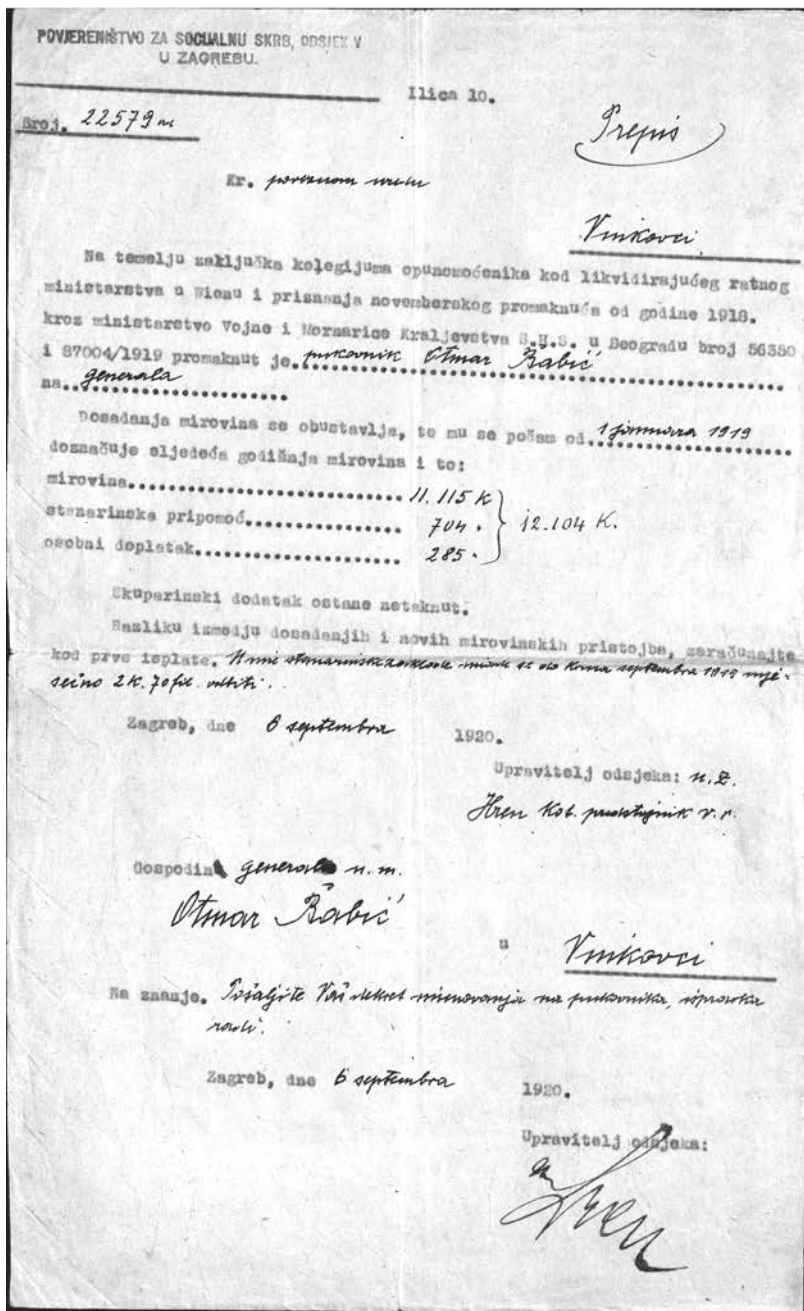


Fig. 2. The photo of the document stored in Vukovar State Archive — A copy of the state social welfare commission's letter to local state revenue office in Vinkovci about Otmar Babić's changed retirement payments [BABIĆ, Otmar, general (Vukovar, 18.VIII.1911. — Zagreb, 9.IV.2000) — Vukovar; 1952/2002; kut. 154; 14.4 d/m. AP, K. VLASTELINSKI, OBITELJSKI I OSOBNI ARHIVSKI FONDOVI, K. 3. Osobni arhivski fondovi, Povjereništvo za socijalnu skrb, Odsjek V u Zagrebu, Kr. poreznom uredu Vinkovci]

Otmar Babić was relieved from his military duties, with retirement payment (“penzijom”). Also, according to the official Austro-Hungarian military records (Fig. 3), Otmar Babić’s military education and training took place in the military academy in Vienna Neustadt (“Wiener Neustadt”) from which he graduated on August 18, 1884, at the age of 23. Since the defeat of the army of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy on November 3, 1918, his official military rank had been a Major General (November 1, 1918).

Otmar Babić had effectively been in active military service for 34 years, 2 months and 15 days, which was stated in his retirement review decision issued by the Minister of Army and Navy in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia (Fig. 4).

It is not only evident from the administrative/institutional discourse how Otmar Babić’s struggled to reinstate his status in the society and managed his retirement finances in the post-First World War Croatia, but it is likewise obvious how different state regimes treated retired Croatian war veterans like him. The initial review of official military records discourse (administration of military career and correspondence with state institutions) shows that Otmar Babić had been treated by Austro-Hungarian state authorities with utmost respect that validates his rank and social status of a highly decorated military official (Fig. 3). However, analyzed administrative/institutional discourse of Otmar Babić’s correspondence with post-war institutions of the newly formed Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes/Kingdom of Yugoslavia (be it in Zagreb or Belgrade or even on the local level in Vinkovci), provides an insight into different power relations developed between new state authorities and former Croatian soldiers who were members of the Austro-Hungarian defeated army. There is a noticeable shift indicative of the new state regime’s attitude towards Otmar Babić and his attempts to affirm his retirement rights from social/welfare system that rendered his existence as a burden (Fig. 4).

Close inspection of such documents gives evidence to legalized double standards for Croatian war veterans compared to Serbian, especially when it comes to forced retirements of former high ranking military officials from the defeated Austro-Hungarian army. In Otmar Babić case, his loyalty to Austro-Hungarian King and monarchy was substituted with his early retirement in the Serbian-led state regime. In this new kingdom, Otmar Babić’s loyalty was overpowered by his struggle to ensure respectable existence, but as time passed by, he became increasingly convinced how his social status as a Croatian war veteran of the defeated army affected his more pronounced national identity so evident in his literary discourse — his poetry.

However, the next shift in state regime’s dynamics of social interaction with its First World War veterans occurred in the Independent State of Croatia. The change in power relations between the state and its war veterans in the Croatian society was reflected in the regime’s efforts to re-enact cultural memory and show respect to former members of the Austro-Hungarian army. What is evident from Otmar Babić’s case is that administrative/institutional discourse to a large extent mimics the normative nature of the Austro-Hungarian bureaucratic legacy while reinstating Croatian war veterans’ pension rights and engaging them in the public life with their long-lost respect (Fig. 5). Moreover, Otmar Babić’s rediscovered loyalty to Croatian political leadership of the Independent State of Croatia since April 10, 1941, is equally illustrated by his enthusiastic expression of Croatian national identity so obvious in his poetry.

Abschrift.

Hauptgrundbuchsblatt.

Mil. Akad.

Assentiert durch das Heeres-Ergänzungsbezirkskommando (Truppe oder Anstalt)		Erscheint im Assentprotokolle Mit der laufenden Zahl		Hauptgrundbuchsheft (Assentjahrgang)		Blatt Nr.	
				Vor- und Zuname Othmar B A B I C			
		Geburtsort		Geburtsjahr		Geburtsjahr	
		Hangelbach bei Gurkfeld		1861			
		Geburtsbezirk		Religion		röm.kath.	
		Gurkfeld		ste.			
		Geburtskomitat		Kunst, Gewerbe, sonstiger Lebensberuf		ohne	
				District Breoder			
		Geburtsland		Slavonien			
		Krain		am 18.8. 1884 als Zögling der Mil. Akademie zu Wien Novakoff auf einen			
Assentiert und eingeteilt		gans freien Militärplatze auf 10 Jahre präsent und 2 Jahre Landwehr zum 78. J.R.					
Eingereicht		am 18. August 1884 Range Nr. 33 P.V.B.Nr. 36					
Personsbeschreibung.							
Haare		Mund		Geimpft			
Augen		Kinn		spricht		Sprachen	
				schreibt			
Augenbrauen		Angesicht		Körpermaß in Metern			
		Besondere Merkmale u. etwaige Gebrechen nach dem Assentprotokolle					
Nase							
Nachgefolgte							
Charge	Veränderung	im Jahre	am	Beschreibung			
Leutnant	eingeteilt	1884	18.8	zur 9. Komp.			
"	angetr.	"	"	den Präsenzdienst			
Oberlt.	ernannt	1889	1.11.	lt. P.V.B.Nr. 51 ex 1888			
"	übersetzt	1890	1.3.	in den Stand des Gendarm. Korps für Besanten und Herzogovina u.c. im Regimente.			
"	transfrt.	"	1.7.	von 78. zum 11. J.R.			
Hptm. 2. Kl.	ernannt	1895	1.11.	Rang Nr. 96 und			
"	transfrt.	"	"	zum J.R. Nr. 89 (P.V.B.Nr. 43			
"	1. Kl. ernannt	1898	"	P.V.B.Nr. 38			
"	beteilt	"	2.12.	mit der Jubiläums-Erinnerungs-Medaille.			

Carl Ueberreiter, 1898

Fig. 3. The photo of the document stored in Vukovar State Archive — A copy of the official military records about Otmar Babić's military career and retirement [BABIĆ, Otmar, general (Vukovar, 18 VIII.1911. — Zagreb, 9.IV.2000) — Vukovar; 1952/2002; kut. 154; 14,4 d/m. AP, K. VLASTELINSKI, OBITELJSKI I OSOBNI ARHIVSKI FONDOVI, K. 3. Osobni arhivski fondovi, Abschrift. Hautgrundbuchsblatt]

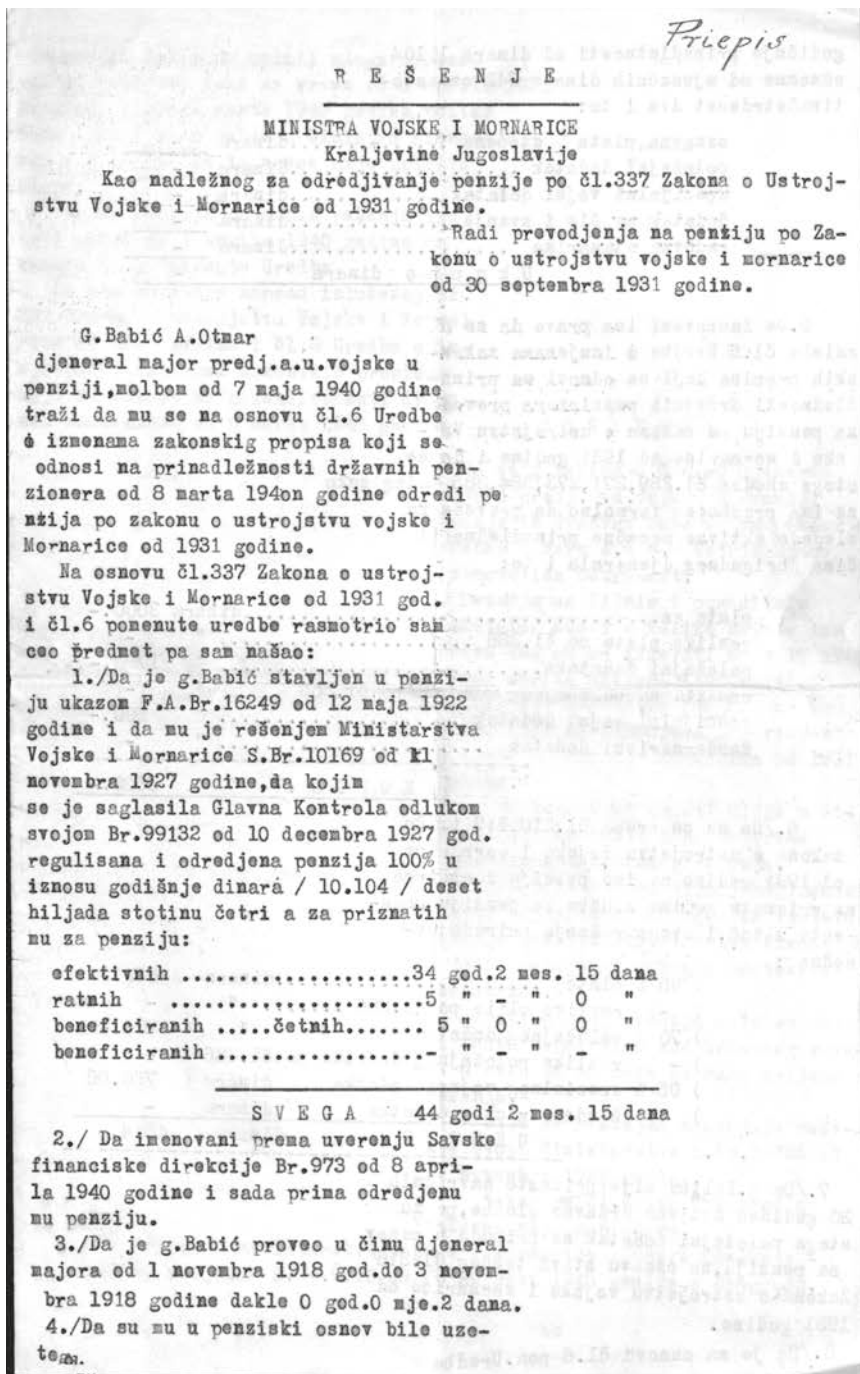


Fig. 4. The photo of the document stored in Vukovar State Archive — A retirement review decision issued to Otmir Babić by the Minister of Army and Navy in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia [BABIĆ, Otmir, general (Vukovar, 18. VIII.1911. — Zagreb, 9. IV.2000) — Vukovar; 1952/2002; kut. 154; 14,4 d/m. AP, K. VLASTELINSKI, OBITELJSKI I OSOBNI ARHIVSKI FONDOVI, K.3. Osobni arhivski fondovi, REŠENJE MINISTRA VOJSKE I MORNARICE KRALJEVINE JUGOSLAVIJE]

RJEŠENJE MINISTARSTVA DOMOBRANSTVA

kao nadležnog po članu 337. zakona o ustrojstvu vojske i mornarice od 30. rujna 1931. za preobredjenje osobne mirovine.

Radi preobredjenja osobne mirovine g. BABIĆ OTMAR, general-major u miru

prema zakonskoj odredbi o berivima svih djelatnih časnika i dulje službujućih dočasnika te umirovljenika ovih skupina, kao što i dnevničara u vojsci Nezavisne Države Hrvatske V. T. br. 47 od 28. lipnja 1941. (Vjestnik vojnih naredaba i zapoviedi br. 21 od 28. lipnja 1941.):

G. BABIĆ OTMARA, general-major u miru

u miru, molbom svojom od 14. kolovoza 1942. traži, da se primi u mirovinski stališ domobranstva na temelju zakonske odredbe o mirovinskom stališu umirovljenika domobranstva br. CXLVIII-914-Z-1942. od 22. svibnja 1942. (Narodne novine br. 114 od 23. svibnja 1942.) i da mu se preobredi osobna mirovina.

Na temelju odredbe člana 337. zakona o ustrojstvu vojske i mornarice od 30. rujna 1931. i § 4. zakonske odredbe br. CXLVIII-914-Z-1942. od 22. svibnja 1942. razmotrio sam cijeli spis, pa sam ustanovio:

1. Da je g. BABIĆ OTMAR, general-major u miru

stavljen u mirovinski stališ odredbom F. A. br. 76249 od 12. svibnja

19. 22. i da mu je rješenjem Ministarstva vojske i mornarice bivše jugoslavenske vojske S. br. 9776 od 25. kolovoza 19. 40, koje je potvrdila i Glavna kontrola svojom odlukom br. 107081 od 5. rujna 19. 40

odredena i dopitana osobna mirovina, a za priznate mu godine za mirovinu:

djelatnih	34	godina	2	mjeseci	15	dana
ratnih	5			"	"	"
beneficiranih četnih	5			"	"	"
beneficiranih u Macedoniji i Crnoj Gori	"			"	"	"
beneficiranih — aneksija Bosne i Hercegovine 1908./09.	"			"	"	"

Ukupno: 44 " 2 " 15 "

2. Da je g. BABIĆ OTMAR

proveo u činu general-majora od 1. studenog 19. 18

do 12. svibnja 19. 22 dakle 3 godina 5 mjeseci 12 dana.

Fig. 5. The photo of the document stored in Vukovar State Archive — A retirement review decision issued to Otmar Babić by the Ministry of Army in the Independent State of Croatia [BABIĆ, Otmar, general (Vukovar, 18.VIII.1911. — Zagreb, 9.IV.2000) — Vukovar; 1952/2002; kut. 154; 14,4 d/m. AP, K. VLASTELINSKI, OBITELJSKI I OSOBNI ARHIVSKI FONDOVI, K. 3. Osobni arhivski fondovi, REŠENJE MINISTRSTVA DOMOBRANSTVA]

Namely, the literary discourse of Otmar Babić's poetry most vividly expresses his loyalties and national identity under three different state regimes: in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes/Kingdom of Yugoslavia, and finally, in the Independent State of Croatia. His notebook entitled "An das Stolze Osterreich" (About Proud Austria) is a diary written in a chronological order based on his involvement in the events of the First World War (warfare and strategy), and it is partially written as a poetry notebook about his initial experience of military service in the Austro-Hungarian army, about his intimate thoughts and engagement in the first year of the war in 1914 and towards its end, as well as about his reflections on geopolitical power relations in the aftermath of the war³⁷. In this notebook, Otmar Babić raises the question about his homeland for the first time in the poem (Fig. 6) with the same title "Wo ist mein Vaterland?" (Where is my homeland?). His sense of national belonging, probably conditioned by his military upbringing in the monarchy of numerous nations is not in conflict with his loyalty to the state whose military service integrates various nations, including Croats. While in active military service, Otmar Babić does not feel a second-rate citizen, he is not mistreated by the state regime and military system because of his Croatian background; nor does he perceive the monarchy as a threat to his identity, social status, or in any way as assimilative to his sense of belonging. In this poem, he clearly states that this is "his" homeland — an integrative monarchy that does not cancel his national identity and infringes upon his sense of loyalty.

At the onset of the First World War, Otmar Babić says his loyal farewell not only to the monarchy epitomized in the Austrian state, but also to his fellow combatants and beloved city Vienna. This multinational monarchy is as much his own as the people and cities³⁸. The sense of pride and belonging to the Austro-Hungarian army are expressed in the discourse of loyalty towards the monarchy and the King, and towards his fellow combatants — dead or alive: "Abschied von den Kameraden. Treu bis in den Tod!", "Abschied von den gefallenen Kamaraden", "Abschied von Wien. Weh Euch! Wenn mufs sterben", "Abschied von Osterreich. Schlaf nahl du stolces Osterreich!"

Otmar Babić's strong sense of Croatian national identity, which is fully integrated into the monarchy, is thus not distorted by his loyalty to the King and the regime he serves. The number of poems show his still very much strong national feelings in the aftermath of the First World War in 1919: "Uskrsna Slava Petra Zrinskog i Frana Krste Frankopana" (Eastern Celebration of Petar Zrinski and Fran Krsto Frankopan) and "Vila Velebita" (Fairy of Velebit)³⁹.

³⁷ BABIĆ, Otmar, general (Vukovar, 18.VIII.1911. — Zagreb, 9.IV.2000) — Vukovar; 1952/2002; kut. 154; 14,4 d/m. AP, K. VLASTELINSKI, OBITELJSKI I OSOBNI ARHIVSKI FONDOVI, K. 3. Osobni arhivski fondovi, *An das Stolze Osterreich*.

³⁸ BABIĆ, Otmar, general (Vukovar, 18.VIII.1911. — Zagreb, 9.IV.2000) — Vukovar; 1952/2002; kut. 154; 14,4 d/m. AP, K. VLASTELINSKI, OBITELJSKI I OSOBNI ARHIVSKI FONDOVI, K. 3. Osobni arhivski fondovi, *An das Stolze Osterreich, Pegasusritt im Weltkrieg, Meine zweite Waffentat, Officiellen Ausklanges Waffentat*; BABIĆ, Otmar, general (Vukovar, 18. VIII.1911. — Zagreb, 9.IV.2000) — Vukovar; 1952/2002; kut. 154; 14,4 d/m. AP, K. VLASTELINSKI, OBITELJSKI I OSOBNI ARHIVSKI FONDOVI, K. 3. Osobni arhivski fondovi, *An das Stolze Osterreich, Pegasusritt im Weltkrieg, Osterreich steht, Die Pahn weht; Der Stellungskrieg; Schicksalsstunde*.

³⁹ BABIĆ, Otmar, general (Vukovar, 18. VIII.1911. — Zagreb, 9.IV.2000) — Vukovar; 1952/2002; kut. 154; 14,4 d/m. AP, K. VLASTELINSKI, OBITELJSKI I OSOBNI ARHIVSKI FONDOVI, K. 3. Osobni arhivski fondovi, *Uskrsna Slava Petra Zrinjskog i Frana Krste Frankopana 30. aprila 1919; Vila Velebita; Gdje je moja domovina?*

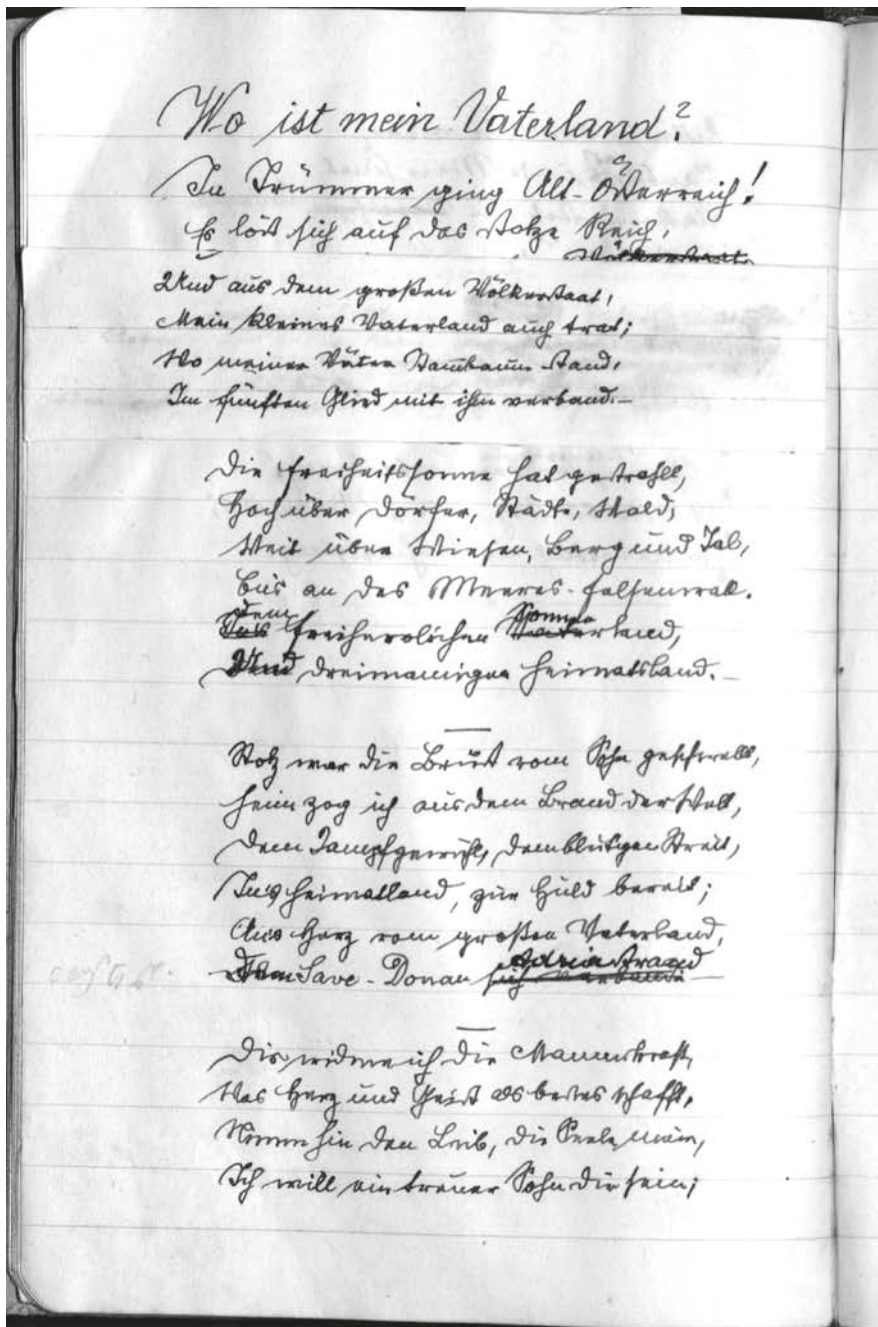


Fig. 6. The photo of the document stored in Vukovar State Archive — Otmar Babić's poem that questions his national identity and sense of loyalty [BABIĆ, Otmar, general (Vukovar, 18.VIII.1911. — Zagreb, 9.IV.2000) — Vukovar; 1952/2002; kut. 154; 14,4 d/m. A., K. VLASTELINSKI, OBITELJSKI I OSOBNI ARHIVSKI FONDOVI, K. 3. Osobni arhivski fondovi, An das Stolze Osterreich, Wo ist mein Vaterland?]

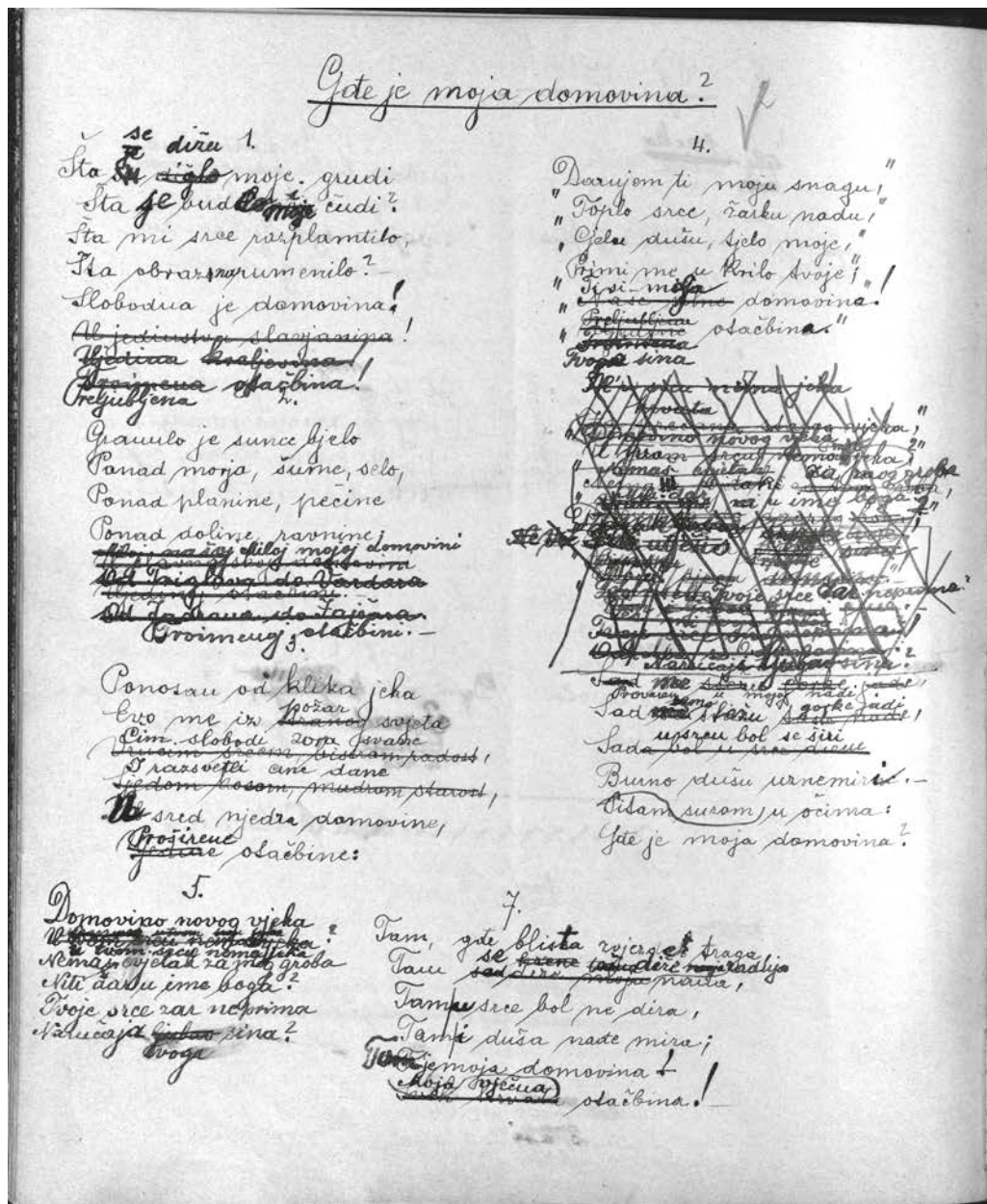


Fig. 7. The photo of the document stored in Vukovar State Archive — Otmar Babič's poem that questions his national identity and sense of loyalty in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes [BABIĆ, Otmar; general (Vukovar, 18.VIII.1911. — Zagreb, 9.IV.2000) — Vukovar; 1952/2002; kut. 154; 14,4 d/m. AP, K. VLASTELINSKI, OBITELJSKI I OSOBNI ARHIVSKI FONDOVI, K. 3. Osobni arhivski fondovi, Gdje je moja domovina?]

The aftermath of the First World War in Otmar Babić's literary discourse illustrates his initial enthusiasm with the new Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes as he offers his services to this new state and then becomes bitterly disappointed with this country, which he nonetheless calls the homeland. This emotional and reality roller coaster is conveyed in his poem entitled symbolically "Gdje je moja domovina?" (Where is My Homeland?). In this poem (Fig. 7), the crossed over but not entirely deleted lines indicate his doubts and questions about how he should feel about this newly formed state and regime that had revealed its true face at the very end of the First World War. Regardless of how one wishes to interpret the content of this poem, it is obvious that Otmar Babić had readjusted his loyalty and national identity in line with Serbian-led state regime. Even though he celebrates the freedom and liberation of the homeland ("Slobodna je domovina!"), the crossed down lines hailing a new united kingdom ("U jedinstvu slavjanina! Ujedina kraljevina! Troimena otačbina!"), cast doubt on his fluid and shifting loyalty. Another crossed line indicates that he might have called his homeland Slavonia (which is part of Croatia), thus implying that he celebrates Croatia's freedom: "U slavonskoj domovini". Namely, poetic lines start with a statement: "Miloj našoj Miloj mojoj domovini" (Our dearest My dearest homeland) and then the following line is crossed: "U slavonskoj domovini" (In Slavonian Homeland), which then continues with following lines: "Od Triglava do Vardara" (From Triglav towards Vardar) implying the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes: "Troimenoj otačbini" (Three-named homeland). One can also interpret his reticence as a calculated effort to manage his newly acquired status of a retired Major General in a more favorable manner, flattering the new regime. However, this is less viable since he states further on that he offers his full services to the new regime: "Darujem ti svoju snagu, Toplo srce žarku nadu, Cjelu dušu tijelo moje, Primi me u krilo svoje, Ti si moja domovina! Tvoga sina otačbina" (I give you my strength, my warm heart and ardent hope, my whole soul and body, take me into your lap, you are my homeland, I am the son of the homeland). Thus, in the following sections he realizes that he was deceived in his hopes for true, honest and justified inclusion into the new state: "Prevaren u mojoj nadi, Sad me stežu gorki jadi, Sad u srcu bol se širi, Burno dušu uznemiri. Suzom pitam u očima: Gdje je moja domovina?" (Deceived in my hopes, Now my bitter sorrows strangle me, Now the pain is piercing my heat, Greatly disturbing my soul, With a tear in my eyes I ask: where is my homeland?) Towards the end of the poem, from initial praise and displayed loyalty to the new Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, Otmar Babić bitterly shifts his loyalty and is faced with brutal rejection from the new state system which no longer requires his services. He therefore states that his homeland must be a different one from where he finds himself in: "Domovina novog vijeka, U tvom srcu nema jeka, Niti cvijetak za mog groba, Nemaš dar u ime boga? Tvoje srce zar neprima u Naručje svoga sina?" (The homeland of the new century, in your heart there are no echoes, Not a flower for my grave, In the name of God you have no gifts for me, Does your heart not receive your son?) Otmar Babić finds his homeland in an otherworldly place.

In his next poem entitled "Tri brata" (Three Brothers), Otmar Babić provides an analysis of how the new state regime operates, how it treats its constitutive nations and to what extent its joint future is viable (Fig. 8).

Using a metaphor — a boat run by three sailors who are lost and do not have a clear destination — Otmar Babić departs from his naïve understanding of a joint nation-state building process filled with brotherly unity and God's blessing, stating that torn apart

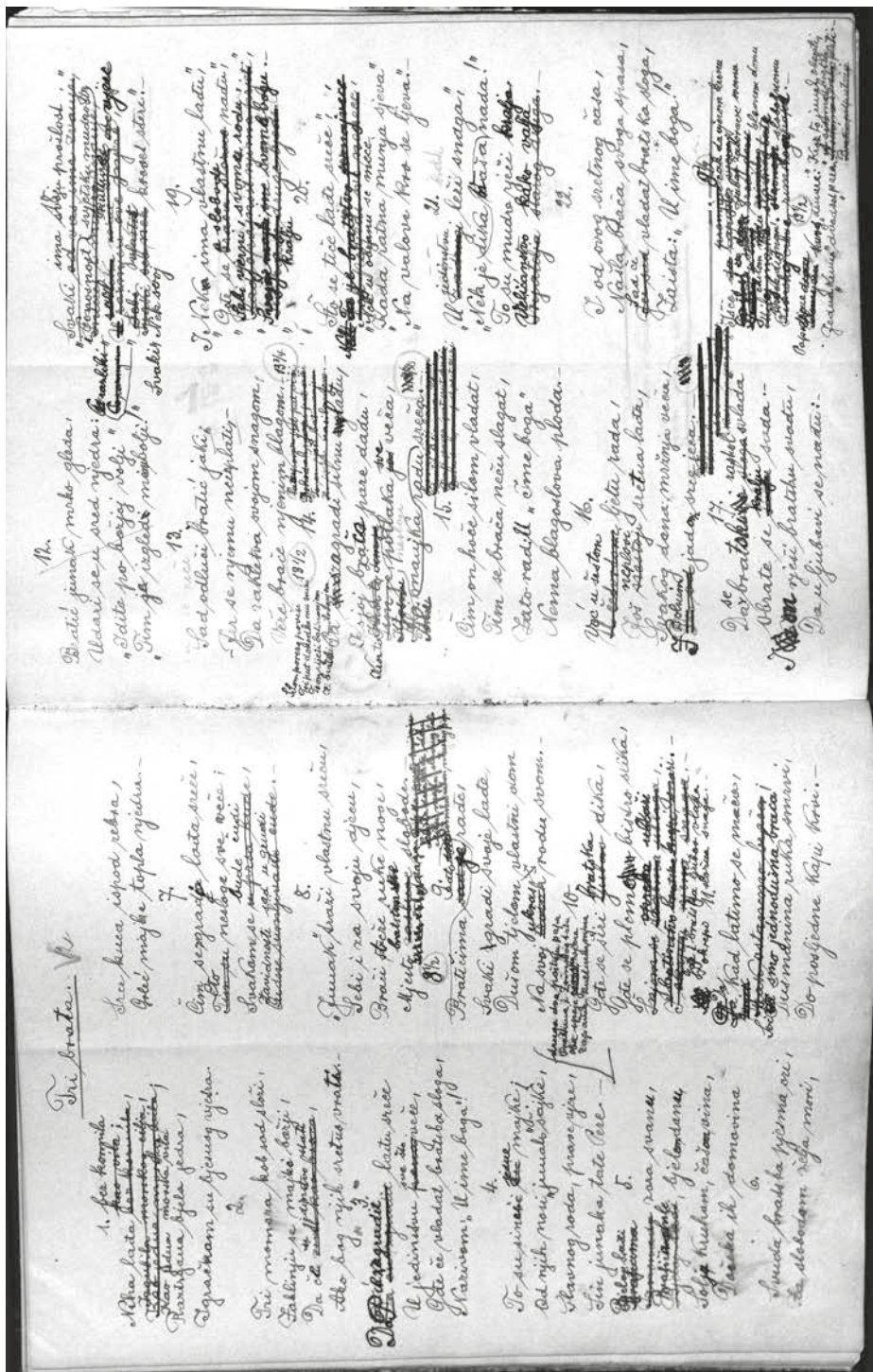


Fig. 8. The photo of the document stored in Vukovar State Archive — Otmir Babić's poem that questions national state building process in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes [BABIĆ, Otmir, general (Vukovar; 18.VIII.1911. — Zagreb, 9.IV.2000) — Vukovar; 1952/2002; kut. 154; 14,4 d/m. AP, K. VLASTELINSKI, OBITELJSKI I OSOBNI ARHIVSKI FONDOVI, K. 3. Osobni arhivski fondovi, Tri brata]

sails could not be mended for the benefit of a promising future in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes. Even though he admits that all three nations come from one mother (“To su sinci jedne majke”), they are nonetheless not equal, and the state (the boat) is led by the nation that has glorious descent, a true faith and a hero — namely, Serbian people and their royal family (“Slavnog roda, prave vjere, Sin junaka tata Pere”). Otmar Babić’s sarcasm and disbelief in the reunited kinship of Slavic tribes thus expose perceived subversive power of nationalist feelings of the Yugoslav constitutive nations: “Svuda bratska pjesma ori, za slobodom želja mori, Srce kuca ispod rebara, Grleć majke topla nje-dra. Čim se gradi lađa sreće, Eto nesloge sve veće; Svakome se bude čudi, Zavidnosti sad u grudi” (Everywhere is brotherly song, the will is tormented by longing for freedom, A heart is beating under the ribs, Caressing warm motherly bosoms. When a boat of happiness is built, there is more disunity, everybody’s needs are awakened, there is envy in their bosoms). He is aware that a victorious brother (Serbs) is in pursuit of his own people’s happiness at the expense of others: “Junak traži vlastitu sreću, Sebi i za svoju djecu, Braći steže ruke noge, Mjesto bratske slobode” (The hero requests his own happiness, to him and his children, He ties his brother’s arms and legs, Instead of brotherly freedom). Thereby, this attitude enhances national feelings in other nations (“Bratičina zato je rađe, Svaki gradi svoje lađe, Dušom tjelom vlastni dom, Na svoj ukras rodu svom”) as O. Babić claims, and the Serbian nation is forced to use its power through financial means in order to rule (“Silom poreze povisi”... “Čim on hoće silom vladat, Tim se braća neću slagat...”). Otmar Babić concludes that after six years there is still no progress in the joint nation-state building process, and the nation is based on anger and hate instead of love: “Već u šestom ljetu rada, Još ne plovi sretna lađa, Svakog dana mržnja veća, I bolnim jad srce jeca”. However, at the end of the poem, Otmar Babić offers a solution, using sarcastically another metaphor — the King who is wise despite his age and can give advice to troubled brothers about how to build and manage their joint boat of happiness and prevent their split: “Da se bratski raskol svlada, Obrate se kralju sada — I on rješi bratsku svađu, Da u ljubavi se nađu”). The solution to troubled partnership burdened with inequality, hate, and resentment is found in national independence. Otmar Babić writes: “Svaki ima svoju prošlost, i svjetsku mudrost, U razlici kulture vjere, Svaki nek svoj krevet stere” (Each to have their own history and cosmopolitan wisdom, with different culture, religion, Each to make its own bed), “I Nek ima vlastitu lađu, Gde se u slobodi nađu, Sebi vjerni, svome rodu Svoje kralju svome bogu” (and let them all have their own boats, to find each other in freedom, faithful to oneself and to its kind, to its King and its God). Sill, while giving such advice, Otmar Babić is aware that unity cannot produce brotherhood since “the hero” is getting richer at the expense of “poor brothers” (“Propadanje kurs dinara: kroz to junak obogati, Jedna kruna dvadeset para: a siromah bratski pati”). Similarly to the previous poem, Otmar Babić frequently rewrites his lines in a fruitless attempt to show his true feelings and reveal what he honestly thinks about the new Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes. Is he coerced into doing so by political correctness that soldiers of a defeated army are expected to respectively show to victorious Serbs, or is it a form of subversive resistance that simply displaces misused loyalty to the monarchy with distrust towards new Yugoslav brotherhood? The answer may lie in the comparison with the literary discourse Otmar Babić develops in his poems under the totalitarian regime of Independent State of Croatia.

As his Croatian national identity grew in proportion to the exerted state pressure, Otmar Babić perceived the new Serbian-led regime imposed onto its Croatian and Slovenes

citizens. So, much like his fellow war veterans, he felt naïvely liberated in the Independent State of Croatia. Overpowered by strong patriotic emotions, Otmar Babić uncritically accepted totalitarian Croatian regime⁴⁰ welcoming in his old age a special attention that was given to the First World War veterans.

His literary discourse in the poem “Slavospjev” (Praise the glory)⁴¹ is free from previous political correctness, lines are not crossed out and re-written, and he is strongly drawn to the nationalistic ideal of liberated and independent Croatian nation-state. In this poem, Otmar Babić, as a retired high ranking military official, praises Croatian Ustaše army in their struggle with glorified Serbians: “Neka slavopjesma ori, Sve do Drine tok, Gđe ustaše sin bori, Slavosrpski skok”. Croatian Ustaša for him are sons of the nation, and Croatian people, he suggests, are proud of their newly found leader: “Hrvatski se narod dići, Poglavnikom svom”. Otmar Babić states that the national motto is “Spremni smo za dom”, with which the proud hero leads the way towards national salvation: “Bože! Daj gordom junaku, Neka vodi nas, Ustašama sreću svaku, Narodu na spas”. He claims that Ustaša and the national leader protect Croatian soil: “Da hrvatsku grudu štite, Sve do vječni vijek, Lovorom naš barjak kite, I junački jek”. In conclusion, Otmar Babić is convinced that Ustaša are fighting the war (the Second World War) for Croatian paradise: “I kud rata grom zaori, Top, čelika zmaj, Ustaša se bori, mori, Za hrvatski raj”.

What can be inferred from the analyzed discourse in texts produced by Otmar Babić given the limited scope of the presented preliminary findings? Following the initial line of the research into the post-First World War discourse of Croatian disabled war veterans by S. Cvikić and Lj. Dobrovšak⁴², it is now possible to gain another insight into the personal histories of Croatian high-ranking officials, such as Otmar Babić, by focusing on their relationship between national identity and loyalty to different state regimes. The analyzed personal archival texts/documents by Otmar Babić, comprising the general post-war discourse of Croatian war veterans⁴³, show that there are five embedded discourses: institutional/administrative discourse; military/professional discourse; discourse of personal correspondence; literary discourse (poetry); and discourse of everyday life. The next level of discursive practice analysis has identified “conceptual frameworks which constitute” Otmar Babić’s statements along with developed “purpose-built vocabularies that depict the power structure behind” his “social status in the society”⁴⁴. Conceptual frameworks evident in the analyzed Otmar Babić’s discursive practices are thus closely related to five embedded discourses: administrative/legal/normative, political/state, military, artistic, and personal/intimate. Taking into consideration positionality of Otmar Babić and texts he produced, it is important to note that his understanding, contemplations, and interpretations are closely related to the social status/standing of a high-ranking military official he occupied in the society, army, and as a citizen of various states. So, his world views and values reflect the war and post-war reality from various standpoints, creating divergent

⁴⁰ How the new state regime of the Independent State of Croatia had used propaganda to manipulate public opinions and gain support, especially, how the Ustaša movement had used media see: *Jareb M. Mediji i promidžba u Nezavisnoj Državi Hrvatskoj*. Zagreb, 2016.

⁴¹ BABIĆ, Otmar, general (Vukovar, 18.VIII.1911. — Zagreb, 9.IV.2000) — Vukovar; 1952/2002; kut. 154; 14,4 d/m. AP, K. VLASTELINSKI, OBITELJSKI I OSOBNI ARHIVSKI FONDOVI, K. 3. Osobni arhivski fondovi, *Slavospjev*.

⁴² Cvikić S., *Dobrovšak Lj.* Croatian Interwar Cultural Memory and Disabled War Veterans. P. 196.

⁴³ Ibid. P. 198.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

and at times conflicting (sometimes even naïve) perspectives on military and personal issues. Otmar Babić based his world views not only on his own experiences living in three different state regimes, but also on his awareness of socio-political circumstances at home and abroad. Including Otmar Babić into Croatian military history of the First World War, poses a dilemma whether to approach it from a bottom-up or top-down perspective: namely, whether to study his life of a privileged high ranking military official from Empire's periphery (top down) and in the Independent State of Croatia; and/or to study him as a marginalized Croat whose military career and life after the First World War in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes/Yugoslavia was no different from all Croatian war veterans that belonged to the defeated Austro-Hungarian army (bottom up)?⁴⁵ However, in Otmar Babić's case, both approaches are equally important and problematic. Based on the preliminary research findings presented in this paper, it is evident that Otmar Babić's neglected place in the Croatian military history of the First World War reflects the reality of a Croat who was a highly educated military official in the Austro-Hungarian army who was a representative of a small nation and was used by the imperial regime that rendered people like him as service providers — loyal military subjects and citizens. Otmar Babić's military career and his subsequent retirement should be therefore understood in full complexity of his life experiences, thoughts, behavior, and feelings that reflect his attitude to the war, Croatian society, and state regimes⁴⁶.

Even though one must bear in mind the misleading nature of war veterans' recollections and memories and their inability to fully capture and express experience of warfare in the right words, their recollections in records of various kinds, such as those of Otmar Babić, are valuable sources of evidence that speak of traumatic experiences and life in the aftermath of a brutal war which also impacted their fellow soldiers, compatriots, families, communities, and the society in general. As indicated by F. Hameršak, various scholarly disciplines in Croatian scholarship, including sociology, have so far studied the First World War experiences of Croatian soldiers from a bottom-up approach⁴⁷. However, he claims, such efforts were overshadowed by still very much descriptive research approach from a headquarters' point of view which was established in the former socialist Yugoslavia by the military research institution in Belgrade — a state institution with its own research priorities that neglected those related to the Croatian case⁴⁸. Therefore, a case study of Otmar Babić belongs to modest preliminary research that tries to contribute to the foundational work⁴⁹ and framing of the Croatian military history of the First World War from a bottom-up approach. Nonetheless, this study is likewise a social and cultural history from below describing dynamics and shifting nature of Croatian war veterans' national identity construction and development of state loyalty. Namely, the developed power relations thus unravel what P. Burke calls a cultural history of violence⁵⁰ even though the post-modernist study of this subject matter is strongly related to the

⁴⁵ For scholarly debate on how to approach a study of military history, readers are advised to consult seminal work: *Keegan J. The Face of Battle*. New York, 1976.

⁴⁶ About complexity of human emotions and what drives men in the war as soldiers, readers are advised to consult seminal work: *Holmes R. Acts of War. The Behaviour of Man in Battle*. London, 2004.

⁴⁷ *Hameršak F. Tamna strana Marsa*. P. 154.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.* P. 157.

⁴⁹ F. Hameršak singles out following foundational authors of Croatian military history about Croatian participation in the First World War: Slavko Pavičić, Ernest Bauer, and Ive Mažuran and Mladen Trnski.

⁵⁰ *Burke P. What is Cultural History?* Cambridge, 2008.

social stratification perspective⁵¹, which somehow in Otmar Babić's case has to do more with his marginalization inside different state regimes/army hierarchy than with his actual social status. However, as a high-ranking military official, Otmar Babić was not only marginalized by the new post-First World War state regime, but more importantly, he was marginalized because he belonged to the defeated Austro-Hungarian army. Like his fellow Croatian war veterans, he had to carry a heavy burden of historical guilt. This is far from labeling his professional military career and personal life in terms of his membership in what post-modernism calls a minority group — belonging to marginalized Croatian war veterans' community. In Otmar Babić's case, a dichotomy between marginalization and elitism is dislocated by, quite often, difficult reality of great social turbulence and extreme violence which brought about socio-political change — a change that was out of his control and could be managed from a substantially different social position in newly formed state regimes. Even though he was quite content with his elitist position inside the military hierarchy of the Austro-Hungarian army, which is evident from his upward mobility — promotions in his military career, Otmar Babić was marginalized by the new post-First World War Serbian-led regime, first of all, by removal from an active military service; and later, by his retirement and an acquired status of a war veteran. Therefore, who he is and what he has become is what determines Otmar Babić's absence inside Croatian First World War "historical oblivion"⁵². While he is fully integrated into the Austro-Hungarian society, where his Croatian national identity is not in conflict with his loyalty to the King and the monarchy, Otmar Babić's loyalty to a new Serbian state regime is in sharp opposition to his sense of assimilation on the level of national identity. This type of microhistory (or history of everyday life)⁵³ therefore contributes to, rather than prevents, inclusion of long forgotten personal memory of Croatian experience of the First World War.

In representation and interpretation of traumatic and violent historical events and their participants, one is always confronted with how to re-think history⁵⁴ and how to position oneself as a scholar — in this case, as a qualitative sociologist and member of the Croatian academic society. Namely, positionality is important as much as a scholar's reflexivity since production of knowledge is greatly invested with power⁵⁵. Therefore, it has been stated in this paper that there is no objective social science that is value neutral and interest free⁵⁶, and, as Keith Jenkins implies, history is not articulated, expressed and debated innocently — it is made for someone as a theory that ideologically predisposes one for material gains⁵⁷. In his interpretation of K. Jenkins' claims, F. Hameršak⁵⁸ con-

⁵¹ *Tumin M. M. Some Principles of Stratification: A Critical Analysis // American Sociological Review. 1953. Vol. 18, issue 4. P. 387–394.*

⁵² Similar is concluded by D. Roksandić in his research on Lujo Matutinović's biography. See: *Roksandić D. Lujo Matutinović (1765. — 1844.) // Istraživački izazovi životopisa jednog nepoznatog maršala. Narodna umjetnost. 1996. Vol. 33. Br. 2. Str. 211–238.*

⁵³ *Gross M. Mikrohistorija: Dopuna ili suprotnost makrohistorije // Otium. 1994. Vol. 2. Str. 18–36.*

⁵⁴ *Jenkins K. Re-thinking History. New York; London, 1991.*

⁵⁵ *Faucault M.: 1) The Archeology of Knowledge and The Discourse on Language. New York, 1972; 2) Counter-Memory: The Philosophy of Difference // Language, Counter Memory, Practice. Selected Essays and Interviews. Ithaka, 1996. P. 113–196.*

⁵⁶ *Charmaz K. Constructionism and the Grounded Theory // Handbook of Constructionist Research / eds J. A. Holstein, J. F. Gubrium. New York, 2008; Norman K. D., Lincoln Y. Strategies of Qualitative Inquiry. [s.l.], 1998.*

⁵⁷ *Jenkins K. Re-thinking History. P. 11–13, 30.*

⁵⁸ *Hameršak F. Tamna strana Marsa. Str. 29.*

cludes that history is one among numerous discourses about the physical world in which individual discourses (conditioned by material interests and power relations), namely, discursive practices, are inherently different, both in time and spaces. It follows then that the history and its study subject — the past — represent a number of disconnected small histories which do not necessitate a single reading of the past. Different reading/interpretations of the past in a variety of discourses (historical, sociological, artistic, economic, and political) therefore, re-enact past events through written, oral, or visual media (books, articles, documentary movies). Based on his understanding of K. Jenkins, F. Hameršak⁵⁹ concludes how history is an inter-textual, linguistic construct which enables reading/interpretation of the past found in texts as raw materials. However, without privileging any discourse, descriptive categories used by historians imply that past is contained in readings and re-readings of stories which cannot be fully checked. Historians are therefore fiction writers whose study and knowledge of the past is “epistemologically fragile” and their interpretations construct “numerous histories” never depicting past events in its totality⁶⁰. Centrality of true, objective, and real accounts of past events is thus dislocated into the realm of historical constructs regardless of how much evidence is collected, checked, and compared to the existent historical interpretations. History is nonetheless a manifestation of a historian’s perspective of deconstructed past that relies and depends upon observations and testimonies of those who witnessed past events, at the same time depending on interpretations of those who made records of it. As indicated by F. Hameršak⁶¹, K. Jenkins perceives history making as a work in progress shaped by multitude of interpretations and language of ambiguous concepts, thus ideologically conditioned by people’s unsettling need to root their existence in the past. Therefore, history is in a certain way collectively written autobiography.

Whether one agrees or disagrees with K. Jenkins’s notions of history making and/or writing, it is important to note that, as indicated by F. Hameršak, the post-modernist historical relativism purported by Jenkins’s understanding of the past cannot simply reduce history to linguistic constructs that (do not create) only give meaning to the real world. Namely, the world is not limited to discursively constructed reality and conditioned by power relations and interests. Therefore, it is claimed here that post-modernist assumptions pertaining to the diminished importance of historical reliability of resources do not preclude the physicality of narrations as evidence of the relived past. Narrations are indeed integral part of history making, and accumulation of knowledge about the past is not aimed at unattainable totality of its reconstructions, but at improved understanding of historical processes knowable through science. Therefore, establishing authenticity and reliability of historical sources, such as autobiography, or in the case of Major General Otmar Babić — personal records, requires believing it to be true and representative of the life documented in texts (narrations). Qualitative sociological analysis of Otmar Babić’s archival records, therefore was focused on autobiographical discourse nested in various texts whose statements uphold authentic biography of a life lived in difficult times of violent and traumatic experiences and memories of war and destruction. Similar to what F. Hameršak suggests⁶² about autobiography as a literary text, when he states that he is not

⁵⁹ *Hameršak F.* Tamna strana Marsa. Str. 29.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.* Str. 30.

⁶¹ *Ibid.* Str. 31.

⁶² *Ibid.* Str. 119.

interested in it as a source of personal history but rather as a source of history of the First World War that comes from a personal perspective, Otmar Babić's subjective accounts of the military past and post-war life were indeed treated in this paper as true testimony⁶³ to long lost Croatian memory of the First World War. Agency of the subject in question, namely of Otmar Babić, was therefore studied not simply as discursive practice, but more importantly, his statements were analyzed and treated as social representations expressed in discourse about the impact of the First World War on his life during and after its events. Otmar Babić's social representations of the Croatian society through personal experience of the First World War and post-war life, however, amount to performative effects of Croatian war veterans' social construction of repressed "cultural memory"⁶⁴ in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes/Kingdom of Yugoslavia, revived later⁶⁵ by the Independent State of Croatia. Therefore, the objective of Foucauldian type of critical sociological analysis in this paper was to "explicate statements that function to place a discursive frame around a particular" Otmar Babić's position in relation to his national identity formation and loyalty in different state regimes during and after the First World War⁶⁶. In view of the limited scope of this paper, the presented preliminary findings were narrowly focused on the text, namely, on Otmar Babić's statements in various types of narrations⁶⁷. Therefore, Otmar Babić's personal records were treated as narrations that belong to the historization of warfare experience — a military history from below. Croatian military history in this respect can still benefit from Otmar Babić's documented ideological, political and poetic expressions found in his personal records⁶⁸.

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⁶³ See: Anderson L. *Autobiography*. London; New York, 2001; Smith S., Watson J. *Reading Autobiography. A Guide for Interpreting Life Narratives*. Minneapolis; London, 2001.

⁶⁴ Cvikić S., Dobrovšak Lj. Croatian Interwar Cultural Memory and Disabled War Veterans. P. 196.

⁶⁵ Reasons behind highly neglected First World War history and non-existent cultural memory could be traced not only to the unfavorable post-war resolution for Croats who belonged to the defeated side of the conflict; but also, according to N. Kisić Kolanović, to how history as science had developed after the experience of the Independent State of Croatia and the Second World War. See: Kisić Kolanović N. *Povijest NDH kao predmet istraživanja // Časopis za suvremenu povijest*. 2002. Vol. 34. Br. 3. Str. 679–712.

⁶⁶ Graham L. J. The Production of Text and "Other" Statements. Discourse analysis and the critical use of Foucault // *Educational Philosophy and Theory*. 2011. Vol. 42, issue 6. P. 667.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Gross M. Susret historije i antropologije // *Narodna umjetnost*. 1996. Vol. 33. Br. 2. Str. 71–86.

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