

DUDEKOVÁ, Gabriela – MANNOVÁ, Elena. *VOJAK MEDZI CIVILMI, CIVIL MEDZI VOJAKMI. Vzťah armády a spoločnosti v období modernizácie. (THE SOLDIER AMONG CIVILIANS, THE CIVILIAN AMONG SOLDIERS. The army and society in the age of modernization)*. Bratislava: ProHistoria, 2017, 512 pages. ISBN 9788089910014.

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The uninterested reader might underrate the information from the title pages that the collective monograph reviewed here is dedicated to the authors' colleague Vojtech Dangl, so I will begin with it. I do this aware of the risk Ivan Kamenec already mentions in the introduction – that any mention of Dangl threatens an immediate shift of genre from standard academic text to laudation. I cannot help it. It is a problem shared across generations and independent of any specific research orientation. In this case, the specific dedication of the book also has a definite formative influence. Vojtech Dangl has not only written excellently about interesting matters, but also inspired other authors, colleagues and friends. More than 20 of them have contributed to this volume in spite of its strict thematic and chronological limits. The excellent editorial work of the two main authors, Elena Mannová and Gabriela Dudeková has greatly contributed to the consistence and readability of the text.

The first three parts of the book are devoted to selected themes from the period of the decline of the Habsburg Monarchy, the First World War and inter-war Czechoslovakia, while the unifying theme of the fourth part is the phenomenon of historical memory. In the conclusion, the main authors have produced a five page summary of the whole work. The texts of the invited authors are supplemented by more than ten pages of personal bibliography of Vojtech Dangl produced by Božena Šed'ová.

The opening chapter by Vladimír Segeš orients the reader in the environment of the Habsburg army of the time of Maria Theresa, combining data about the army's structures, the relationship of the head of state to the army, important military activities of the time, the regulations of everyday military life and the usefulness of these sources not only for research on social history, but also for comparative historical linguistics. Ingrid Kušniráková is primarily concerned with the institutionalization of social security for army veterans in the 18th century. By "following the money" she thoroughly maps the network of formal and informal structures of real and symbolic power. In this way, it is possible to work out the priority richer and poorer noblemen attached to their charitable projects and how care for invalids related to the momentary distribution of political forces and the trends towards centralization or decentralization of the state. The effort the elites of the time put into building up systematic solutions to social security as such is humbling for us today.

Peter Šoltés analyses the variants of the modern image of the Slovaks as soldiers and their instrumentalization. His text suggested to me that it is a pity there is no similar research for the 20th century, in which we could identify longer term continuities, for example, in the use of historical images in the military propaganda of the Slovak state or constructing the "peace-loving" image of the army in the 1950s. In connection of the

exploitation of the Hussite theme by Slovak national revivalists in the 18th and 19th century, it is possible to observe comparisons in the interesting study by Georgij Meľnik on interpretations of the Hussite wars in Slovak historiography in the second half of the 20th century from *Forum Historiae* I/2014.

Two case studies conclude the chapter. Thanks to Eva Kowalská and her text on Imrich Zay, the reader can become fully aware of the degree to which our own experience influences our ideas about history. Since the middle of the 20th century, we have broken away from the idea of a military career as a highly intellectual undertaking. Ivana Kollárová devotes her attention to the many sided activities of Friedrich von Trenck. She gives extensive political and socio-cultural context while observing the limited space and preserving the attractiveness of the text. For these reasons should become obligatory reading for writers of biographies.

The second part: *“The First World War: Officers, soldiers and the Great War”*, is not only a chronological continuation of the theme, but also a picture of the relationship between the army and society. Through the figure of Archduke Frederick, Roman Holec approaches the decision making mechanisms “in the highest circles”, including the tension between persons afflicted by indecisiveness and those who strove to decide. The frequent occurrence of moments, in which wives intervened and influenced the results of the decisions of the formal “decision makers”, both in the cited sources and in the author’s interpretation, unwittingly raises the question of whether the Marshal really wanted “to lead the state” or was it the Marshal’s wife, and if so, why the author even today does not admit the real actors at least in the lesser titles. Dušan Kováč devotes his attention to the views of Slovak soldiers in the initial phase of the war. He points to such motivations for joining the army that are often neglected in the canonical national story, for example, successful enlistment as an understandable official confirmation of the mental and health quality of the recruit, important on the marriage market in rural communities. He also stresses the strength of the psychological barrier of the inviolability of the publicly given, ceremonially sanctified oath. Gabriela Dudeková’s text on the theme connects with the key research questions of the loyalty and fighting morale of the ordinary soldiers. Geographically, the field of research extends to the environment of the Slovak immigrants in America, exposed to propaganda from the government of Hungary, politically differentiated immigrants’ societies and the attractive possibility to cut themselves off and remain undisturbed in the civilian working life of immigrants.

Daniela Kodajová’s chapter fully expresses one of the unique features of army decision making, namely its strongly practical scale of priorities and high degree of autonomy from what “was or was not permitted in the civilian sphere”. In this case it is possible to observe that the state became the initiator and sponsor of a widely accessible genre of popular literature, namely prayer books in minority languages including Slovak with the aim of securing and strengthening the loyalty of the soldiers and so increasing their ability to fight. Otherwise little-tolerated patriots suddenly got the possibility of state orders. It was similar with education in an accessible language, necessary, for example, to improve knowledge of hygiene among ordinary soldiers. From the first half of the 20th century, it is possible to mention a similar civil/military cultural – political dichotomy in the case of the ideologically and religiously justified ban on the production and use of

contraceptives in the Slovak state, from which – not surprisingly – the army was exempt. Maintaining the ability to fight was always more important than moralist proclamations. Kodajová's work is followed by that of Štefan Gaučík with an analysis of the reflection of Hungary's wartime economy in the journalistic writing of the time and in Hungarian historiography. He repeatedly confirms the fruitfulness of the inter-disciplinary approach, which enables us not only to perceive but also to research war as an economic phenomenon as well as a political matter in the given period and later, when its interpretation became associated with current political agendas.

The third part of the publication contains less mutually compatible but interesting texts concerned with inter-war Czechoslovakia. It begins with Miloslav Szabó's chapter on the delayed echoes of the wave of post-war looting of Jewish property, the subsequent "punishment expeditions" against the perpetrators and the suppression of these, when they returned to media discourse at the beginning of the 1930s. This happened in connection with a widely reported trial of a legionary, who returned after spending 10 years abroad and was accused of murdering seven Jewish civilians. Claims reversing the roles of perpetrator and victim resonated in public opinion. Szabó's analysis shows the continual presence of anti-Semitic narratives across a wide range of the political spectrum. This substantially contradicts the idea of a breaking change in rhetoric in 1938. Miloslav Čaplovič has contributed a chapter on the participation of significant Slovak personalities in the Czechoslovak legions, including 16 biographical medallions. Imrich Purdek has similarly dealt with Czechoslovak military symbolism of the inter-war period. The part devoted to the inter-war period ends with a condensed review of the development of organizational conceptions of state security in Central and South-Eastern Europe by Valerián Bystrický.

In the conclusion of the book, the text again turns to analytical study of selected case studies, in this case thematizing historical memory connected with war, military leaders and the armed forces. Marcela Bednárová concentrated on the reflection of Napoleon and his policies in Štúr's group and their contemporaries in other Slavonic countries. She points to the great differentiation and contradictions between and within these perceptions depending on the specific region, generation and moment of formulation of the given view. For example, we can compare the varied interests of Polish, Russian and Slovene patriots and their resulting attitudes to state centralization. She also considers literary style, since in the eyes of the romantic, creative freedom in idealization of the "heroic" personality strongly prevail over the criterion of the factual adequacy of information. However, the initial dichotomic picture of French society (old clericals/new enlightened) and of the French revolution as universally "*regarded by the European cultural elites as the gateway to freedom for the nations...*" is excessively disturbing here. Some parts of society do not fit the picture, for example, the young clericals, and monarchists, who paid with their lives for expressing their views during the revolution.

Elena Mannová traces the variations in the military veterans' societies in the long continuity from the time of the monarchy to the period after the fall of communism. The positive influence of crossing the traditional historiographic milestones is also found here. It enables comparative research on the approach of regimes to ideologically incompatible societies, and, on the other hand, research into the effectiveness of their self-pre-

servation strategies. For example, from the retrospective point of view of two or three decades later, the restrictive way of dealing with obvious monarchists after 1918 can really look like an unattainable model of respect for freedom. Data about the long-term survival of societies with the help of deliberately reduced “political” visibility, for example, by re-designation as funeral support associations, are also interesting for comparative study.

The text by Michal Kšiňan and Juraj Babják anchored by the year 1989, maps the state and changes of collective memory of the First World War in recent decades. The interest, revived after years of political marginalization in the anniversary years 1984–1988 or to be more precise especially in the later part of the period characterized by perestroika, when there was less censorship of the positive changes associated with the founding personalities of the republic, continued into the period after the change of regime. Here, however, it began to strike against the counter-myth about the wartime state of 1939–45, as well as new problems of an economic character such as maintenance of military cemeteries. I think the combination of the themes of cinematography and military history clubs into one section is not entirely successful, especially if the field of literature concerned with the First World War is left untouched. At least the changes in the standard selection of reading for schools deserve mentioning. On the other hand, it is necessary to appreciate the inclusion of museum exhibitions in the section on the centenary because historians of the most recent periods are often functionally blind towards “non-paper” sources. In the last chapter, Peter Macho concerns himself with the phenomenon of monuments to Štefánik, which were strong community status symbols from the beginning. He devotes special attention to the history of the monument originally intended for Banská Bystrica and ordered from a local artist Friso Motoška. However, during the production process it was redirected for financial reasons to the Slovak immigrant community at Cleveland in America.

It is possible to state that the collection of texts reviewed here is not only a worthy, but also an enviable homage to a historian, who, as the main authors say, as a “*civilian among soldiers*”, significantly contributed to the development of knowledge on the life of soldiers among civilians, “*on the relationship of society to the army, on loyalty and anti-militarism, on barracks and garrisons, on the professional and private lives of officers, on the influence of the army on everyday life and culture in the towns, and on other aspects of military and civilian life*”. Just as Vojtech Dangl has inspired the origin of this book, it will also stimulate further “non-militarist” socio-cultural research on the history of the armed forces.

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