

# **Veterans and War Victims in Eastern Europe during the 20<sup>th</sup> Century: A Comparison**

**Natali Stegmann / Katrin Boeckh**

The care for war victims was ‘a harbinger of the welfare state’; as formulated by Michael Geyer in 1983 in a groundbreaking article, in which he compared the care policy in France, Great Britain and Germany after the First World War.<sup>1</sup> This was the first war which was waged under the provision of a general conscription. In the European theatres of war, men – pulled out of their civilian lives – fought against one another risking their health, their integrity and their life. This could occur due to closer ties between state and society. The arm of the state reached into the homes of the worker and farmer as well as the townsmen and nobility, when it came to recruiting men for the war. In return, they would not only enjoy the status as voting eligible citizens; they also counted on the public institutions paying justice to them and their families in case something happened to them; they expected respect from their fellow citizens; and that they claimed for recognition for their sacrifice, be it in hard cash, be it on the level of symbol politics. Furthermore, gender relations would generally be defined in the sense of pre-war politics

1 Michael Geyer, Ein Vorbote des Wohlfahrtsstaates. Die Kriegsopferversorgung in Frankreich, Deutschland und Großbritannien nach dem Ersten Weltkrieg, in: *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 9 (1983), pp. 230-277; for the state of research in the Western countries cf. also: Deborah Cohen, *The War Come Home. Disabled Veterans in Britain and Germany, 1914–1939*, Berkeley / Los Angeles / London 2001; Sabine Kienitz, *Beschädigte Helden. Kriegsinvalidität und Körperbilder 1914–1923*, Paderborn u. a. 2008; Joanna Bourke, *Dismembering the Male. Men's Bodies, Britain and the Great War*, Chicago 1996; Sophie Delaporte, *Gueules cassées de la Grande Guerre*. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition Paris 2004; Verena Pawlowsky / Harald Wendelin, *Kriegsopfer und Sozialstaat. Österreich nach dem Erstem Weltkrieg*, in: Natali Stegmann (Ed.), *Die Weltkriege als symbolische Bezugspunkte. Polen, die Tschechoslowakei und Deutschland nach dem Ersten und nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg*, Prague 2009, 127–146.

by the arrangement of social policy. Here it also concerned the image and the honour of men between the military and the civilian role models.<sup>2</sup>

The French, British and Germans fought on the same battlefields during the First World War; although the soldiers were part of the same events, they did not make the same experiences.<sup>3</sup> Everywhere in Europe, states were confronted with the same problems at the end of the First World War: masses of soldiers returned to their home country, most of them without earnings, many of them severely and irreversibly injured. The public institutions tried, within the framework of guidelines of their respective social policy, to live up to the expectations of the returning soldiers. Public institutionalised war victims' policy was a novelty at the time in all of Europe. Until into the First World War there generally were support services for war invalids. The social services were however provided by charitable organisation and not by public authorities. In all involved states comprehensive social services for war widows and orphans as well as for the dependants of war invalids, were as fundamental and new as public measures for 'reintegration' of war invalids in the labour market and the inclusion of remedial care, counselling and nursing into the public health care catalogue.<sup>4</sup> Herewith, the young tradition of social insurance was tied in. War victims' care and remembrance policy oriented toward particular examples. As well as the resurrection of monuments for fallen soldiers, social policy was also symbol politics to a great extent.<sup>5</sup> Hereby, war efforts were defined for what they were worth, what a returning soldier had to achieve and who he had to look after it with. The new laws with this also created a hierarchy of the returning soldiers.

These indications to common characteristics should however not alter the view on the considerable difference in the arrangement of public policy and in social practice. As a clarification to these differences, it is not enough to only point to winners and the losers – as Geyer's comparison has already shown.<sup>6</sup> What the war represented in the lives of the former soldiers, as they defined their status as veterans and victims of war, as they portrayed their experiences, depended on both social and socio-political tradition as well as the group specific meaning of the war. Especially in Germany, the 'shame of Versailles' and the insult to honour was, for a long time, at the centre of attention.<sup>7</sup>

2 Maureen Healy, *Civilizing the Soldier in Postwar Austria*, in: Nancy M. Wingfield / Maria Bucur, *Gender and War in Twentieth-Century Eastern Europe*, Bloomington / Indianapolis 2006, pp. 47–69.

3 For the concept of war experience: Nikolaus Buschmann / Horst Carl, *Zugänge zur Erfahrungsgeschichte des Krieges: Forschung, Theorie, Fragestellung*, in: idem (Ed.), *Erfahrungsgeschichtliche Perspektiven von der Französischen Revolution bis zum Zweiten Weltkrieg*, Paderborn / München / Wien / Zürich 2001, pp. 11–26.

4 Geyer, *Ein Vorbote des Wohlfahrtsstaates* (note 1), p. 234 f.

5 For monuments cf.: Reinhart Koselleck, *Die Transformation der politischen Totenmale im 20. Jahrhundert*, in: Martin Sabrow / Ralph Jessen / Klaus Große Kracht (Ed.), *Zeitgeschichte als Streitgeschichte. Große Kontroversen seit 1945*. München 2003, 205–228; Marek Nekula, *Tschechische Pantheons im europäischen Kontext*, in: *Jahrbuch für Europäische Ethnologie 2009: Tschechien*, 29–52; Christoph Mick, *Der Kult um den Unbekannten Soldaten in der Zweiten Polnischen Republik*, in: Martin Schulze Wessel (Ed.), *Nationalisierung der Religion und Sakralisierung der Nation im östlichen Europa*, Stuttgart 2006, pp. 181–200.

6 Clearest is here the comparative view on the victor nations France and Great Britain.

7 Here recently a different image arises, cf.: Benjamin Ziemann, *Die Konstruktion des Kriegsveteranen und die Symbolik seiner Erinnerung*, in: Gerd Krumeich / Jost Dülffer (Ed.), *Der verlorene Frieden. Politik und Kriegskultur nach 1918*. Essen 2002, pp. 101–118; Christian Weiß, *Opfer für den Frieden. Die pazifistische Kriegsdeutung des*

When one compares such statements to those of other European countries, then there is some indication, that damages that were incurred in similar form according to specific contexts are articulated completely different and moreover even experienced differently. In addition, besides the post war regime, the respective national policy and the agitation of the war victims' and veterans' association contributed too. The role of the war for the nation, the respective idea of democracy, citizenship and conscription, as well as the socio-political and civil societal traditions were the actual determinants. This can only be shown in a comparison.

When we turn to the war victims and veterans in Eastern Europe in this special issue, then it occurs that the inclusion of this region in the described context is of substantial delay. Withal, we follow a quite pragmatic concept of Eastern European, that encompasses the region and that has been traditionally researched in the Eastern European history (Central Eastern and South Eastern Europe included). Only in more recent times, have researchers applied themselves to various areas of this complex topic. A workshop in February 2001 in Regensburg brought several of these together.<sup>8</sup> The papers discussed there are now available in revised format. They present new research results, that rest on comprehensive sources and that for the first time are introduced in this comparative synopsis. Herewith, we explicitly take over Geyer's question on the interdependencies of war victims' care, national citizenship and statehood of welfare. This question is open enough, to find links to and offers at the same time a contrast for a comparison of the new research results of some Eastern European countries with those of Western European countries. Furthermore, the concept by Geyer is not only extended in spatial perspectives. Simultaneously, we also expand the temporal context, in which besides the politics of the interwar period we also highlight the consequences of the war in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Geyer's concept is insofar also expanded, that besides the war victims' perspective, veterans are also in focus; and whereby at the same time the negotiation processes on significance, presence and value of war participation are reinforced between state and societal actors. It results from the character of the wars dealt with, that the questions of nationalities and state building in the East European context comes to the forefront more strongly.

The historical context of the region in question is exemplified by certain characteristics: First it is important to recall that the mass wars of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in Eastern Europe had particularly high numbers of casualties. The fates of the returning soldiers, invalids and the surviving dependants in the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Yugoslavia and in Kosovo, are dealt with in this discussion. Common to these countries is that after various wars they all were described as winning states; after the First World War, the Second World War as well as after, what is on their view the last European war, the

Reichsbundes der Kriegsbeschädigten, Kriegsteilnehmer und Kriegerhinterbliebenen, in: Stegmann (Ed.), *Die Weltkriege* (note 1), pp. 169–186; also for Austria the Topoi were extremely important, cf. Healy, *Civilizing* (note 2); for Hungary corresponding research has yet to be conducted.

<sup>8</sup> The workshop was financed by the Fritz Thyssen Foundation. We thank the Foundation for their friendly support.

war in Kosovo. The historiography of these countries and on these countries, which for decades has been predefined by the Soviet system, also remained silent on the care of war veterans – in the Soviet Union as well as in other states of the Eastern Block. Although Tito's Yugoslavian veterans and partisans were obtrusively put at the centre of his state legitimisation, also there no one paid attention to socio-political topics. At present, it still appears that there is no genuine interest in a regeneration of history on veterans and – as in the Yugoslavian case – on partisans. In Russia, the glorious national past is in high course, in the countries of imploded Yugoslavia there are often too close ties to the Communist system in the way; also here logic and practices of the partisan worship are taken over and thereby national content is replenished. The significance of the two world wars for East European society is still shown today at world wars' festivities, which above all are nurtured in Russia. Here the wars are remembered in elaborate victory parades, at which many decorated veterans hold a forum.

### **The Country Samples: Wars in Eastern Europe during the 20<sup>th</sup> Century**

The First World War brought about a topographical change, which particularly affected the East European region. The reason for this was that the multiethnic great empires of the Habsburg monarchy and the Ottoman Empire as well as tsarist Russia collapsed and in their place came a range of successor states. Out of the Habsburg legacy, Czechoslovakia arose as a new state; Poland came into being after more than one hundred years of partitioning between the Habsburg, Prussian, as well as Russian areas. Into its western half, the Kingdom of Yugoslavia also integrated territory formerly belonging to the Habsburg Crown, namely Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia and Slovenia. Not only Yugoslavia, but also the parliamentary run Poland, during the interwar period, went through similar political developments as all other Central Eastern and South Eastern European states – with the exception of Czechoslovakia and Finland –, namely they all suffered from authoritarian regimes that were maintained up to the Second World War. Also from the economic perspective, the Central Eastern and South Eastern European states were similar in that they were all characterised as agricultural; again here the exception is Czechoslovakia with its industrial regions. With the 1917 October Revolution, Russia took its own path, with as result the establishment of the first Soviet state. For all other states in Eastern Europe the end of the First World War was therefore the beginning of a new political, national and societal order, with which they had to prevail and consolidate the post war aftermath.

#### **The Case of the Soviet Union**

A great deal of the seven decades lasting Soviet Union was marked by military actions, occurring outside the borders as well as within. This was actually not to be expected after the 1917 October Revolution, when the Bolsheviks came to power, as the Russian

soldiers and population faced war fatigue, and the first act of government was a 'Decree on Peace' of 26<sup>th</sup> October 1917, passing a general armistice, whereby they immediately offered peace negotiations to the warring Central Powers. However, it never came to this. Anti-Bolshevik White Terror, Red Terror, and rural Green Terror as well as nationalistic riots, foreign intervention groups and the Polish attack on Soviet Russia hardly constituted more manageable fronts during the Russian civil war, which extensively wore on from Petrograd to Vladivostok, from 1917 to 1921. Solely the civil war already demanded six million deaths. The veterans' army of these wars was not excluded from the social revolutions of the 1930s by the Stalinist 'Revolution from Above' or by the collectivisation, industrialisation and the accompanying mass terror.

The Second World War started as the Soviet interpreted 'Great Patriotic War', first with the German attack in 1941 – excluded is the between National Socialist Germany and USSR agreed upon partitioning of Central Eastern Europe. As the Soviet troops crossed the border into west Poland in 1939, they barely had any fatalities. However, hereafter the World War continued with an incredible Soviet death toll: 20 million war casualties are estimated, independent of the devastation in further regions in the west and south. Also here, a local civil war in the west of Ukraine was involved, that was supported by a Ukrainian national movement and lasted until the 1950s.

After the Second World War, the European and global position of the Soviet Union had changed: they were now recognised as a world power, although they soon left the Anti-Hitler-coalition. The block confrontation in the Cold War progressed on the threshold of an open war; nevertheless the proxy war was maintained by both camps. At the end of the 1970s, the USSR was seized by deep internal crises that manifested economically, politically and socially as well as a crisis of legitimacy. In this situation, the Soviet leadership carried out one last war, the war in Afghanistan of 1979-1989, that cost 13 000 Soviet soldiers' lives. This also led to the collapse of the Soviet system and the USSR dissolution in 1991.

### The Polish Case

The outbreak of the First World War was greeted by the leading Polish politicians. Already at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the national poet Adam Mickiewicz wished for an armed conflict between the German, Austrian and Russian partitioning powers, as only then the so-called national rebirth of the Polish state could be a realistic option. The Polish liberation from the domination of the partitioning powers was a longstanding tradition of national rebellions and was simultaneously the product of diplomatic interventions, especially in France and in the USA. It was the later president of the Republic, leader of the national oriented Polish Socialist Party (Polska Partia Socjalistyczna, PPS) Józef Piłsudski, who already at the beginning of the war called upon Polish men as well as women, who should initially fight on the side of the Habsburg formation for the liberation of Poland. It concerned the 'Legion'. The majority of the Polish soldiers fought simultaneously in the armies of the various partitioning powers. Even though the

assembly of the legion had great symbolic charisma, it was more so to be drawn back to the diplomatic efforts of the Polish negotiators, that the establishment of an independent Polish state with free access to the sea was accomplished in January 1918 by the 13<sup>th</sup> point of Wilson's 14 Point Programme (in November of the same year, the Polish Republic was proclaimed). After the Russian Revolution, Central Eastern Europe was to be represented as a buffer zone to fend off Bolshevism. The eastern border of Poland suggested by the British foreign minister Lord Curzon, did not meet Piłsudski's territorial requirements, who supported the link to the former Polish-Lithuanian aristocratic republic, the so-called Jagiellonian state idea. The Polish legion campaigned for their eastern border until 1921, which ended with extensive territorial advances.

With the attack of the German Armed Forces on Poland, the Second World War started. According to the secret additional protocol of the Hitler-Stalin-Agreement, Polish territory was divided fairly exactly along the Curzon line. The military resistance of the national army was swiftly broken; even so various groups fought during the entire war against the occupying forces. The Soviet as well as the National Socialist regime went with utmost brutality against the population. Those hit particularly harsh, were the people living in the areas that were first occupied by the Soviets and then after the attack by the German Armed Forces on the Soviet Union were occupied by the National Socialist troops. Although Poland formally belonged to the winning states of the Second World War, they had to suffer territory loss in the east – which was determined then and until today is still the valid east border that stretches along almost the same line as Curzon once drew. For these losses Poland was compensated with territory in the west, which after forced resettlement of Germans was reconquered territory, which to a great part was newly settled by mainly Polish from the east of the country. The Polish underground army attempted an uprising in August/September 1944 in Warsaw, to free the country on own strength. The Red Army awaiting in the meanwhile on the other side of the bank of the Vistula, later claimed that the liberation of the Polish for of their making. Many people did not survive the mentioned war; it is difficult to measure and a precise method of calculation is needed. For the time up to 1921, Julia Eichenberg will present estimations in the available contribution.

### The Czechoslovakian Case

Out of Bohemia and former Upper Hungary, Czechoslovakia was erected in October 1918. The majority of the Czechs and Slovaks had fought in the Habsburg Army pursuant to their draft cards. At the same time, the Czechs established a legion. The legion was initially recruited in Russia and fought against the Habsburg association for their independence. Only at the end of 1917 or the beginning of 1918, it happened that the legion fell under the supreme command of the Czechoslovakian national committee and came to be recognised as the army of the still to be founded Czechoslovakian state. As in the Polish case, the perspective of sovereignty became considerably better due to the course of the war, the October Revolution and American politics. The foreign politics of

the founding presidents Tomáš G. Masaryk and his successor Edvard Beneš, who initially was the minister of foreign affairs, played an important role. The Slovak territories were occupied by the members of the legion, to defend them from Hungarian claims, however without it coming to a formal war. The Czechoslovakian politics was claimed to have a pacifist tenor; nevertheless they invested significant funds in the armour of the country. Thereby they oriented the construction of the army on the example of their French alliance partner.

When as a result of the Munich Agreement in September 1938, the Sudeten regions were separated from Czechoslovakia, Beneš did not command the Czechoslovakian Army as to avoid senseless bloodshed. Also the establishment of the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia in March 1939 passed without belligerent disputes. Just so, it was the Czechoslovakian Army, the Resistance and the Slovakian Partisans, who fought against the National Socialist occupying forces in the conception of the government in exile. As for the consolidation policy, the Slovak uprising from August 1944 and the Prague uprising of May 1945 played an important role. Different as in Poland, the role of the Soviet Union as liberator of Czechoslovakia was immediately recognised at the end of the war.

### The Yugoslavian Case to the War in Kosovo

Yugoslavia existed as a state during the 20<sup>th</sup> century in three different models: first during the interwar period as a kingdom, then as a socialist republic after the Second World War and after its implosion, from 1992 to 2001 as a federation between Serbia and Montenegro.

Similar to the Soviet Union, the internal situation of this country was characterised over years by war- and civil war like conditions, the signing of international peace treaties by the governments in Belgrade did not necessarily lead to the pacification of Yugoslavia. After the conclusion of the in Paris negotiated peace treaties, that provided the new south Slavic state with a relatively large territory growth after the First World War, guerrilla like condition continued in the country by irrendentistic groups. In the south regular soldiers were again and again deployed against rebellious Albanian free gatherers, while the border to Bulgaria was repeatedly crossed by armed Bulgarian units in order to violently bring about border changes. At the same time the general dissatisfaction with the political system and the since 1929 existing royal dictatorship, as well as with the homogenising policy, especially vis-à-vis nationalities, led to an increasingly stronger radicalising growing group, which expressed itself more and more in the execution of politically motivated attacks.

The Second World War started for Yugoslavia with the attack by the Axis Powers on April 6<sup>th</sup> 1941. In the fragmented country, it was the partisans under the leadership of Tito, who took up the underground war against the occupying forces. When, after the German retreat, Tito also took over the national leadership, then to the founding myths of his regime, belonged the myth that the country was 'liberated' with close to no help of the Red Army. Cornerstones of the new elite were his former fellow combatants, while



other resistance groups such as the royalist *četnici* were persecuted. In no other East or West European country the political positions of the veterans – their death toll totalled after reliable calculation over one million – was as high as in Yugoslavia. Without further wars being waged against foreign interventions, the militarism in Yugoslavia remained a self-evident instant of public life, with a highly equipped army as well as a civil, the so-called territorial defence, that had been established with the ‘People’s Defence Act’ of 1969, and battle instructions in primary and secondary schools. The background for this was that after Tito’s break with Stalin in 1948, Yugoslavia was no longer a member of the Warsaw Pact, but was the cofounder of the Movement of Non-Aligned. In doing so, Belgrade constantly suspiciously expected possible attacks from the East, to a lesser extent from the West.

The wars produced a new generation of veterans on the occasion of the implosion of Yugoslavia in the 1990s, introduced by the declarations of independence of Croatia, Slovenia, Macedonia and Bosnia-Herzegovina (1991). With the exception of Macedonia, all other of the republics became the parade field of the Yugoslavian People’s Army, until matters were formally settled with the Dayton Agreement in 1995, especially the controversial situation in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

The setting for the last Yugoslavian war was Kosovo, where regular and special units of the Yugoslavian Army and the Albanian underground fighters of the Kosovo Liberation Army (UÇK) opposed one another, which fought for a Yugoslavian independent Kosovo. The arising spiral of violence, fired by the attack of the UÇK on the Serbian police stations and officers and an escalation of police and military violence towards the rural population catalysed the manageable guerrilla troops in an armed resistance movement of several thousand. The Yugoslavian major offense, once started in 1998, escalated more and more, affected the civil population and forced them into mass emigration. NATO conducted airstrikes on targets in Serbia and Montenegro in 1999, first forced the Belgrade government under Milošević to relent. Nine years later, the Kosovar leadership, again composed of deserved UÇK soldiers, managed to proclaim Kosovo’s independence.

From these reports there are several fundamental differences to be made in war experiences between Eastern and Western Europe, which also effected war victims’ and veterans’ policy. To name in particular is the tradition of civil wars, which were inflamed time again in Eastern Europe during the 20<sup>th</sup> century – the Russian civil war, the guerrilla warfare in Soviet Ukraine after 1944/45, the Second World War in the Balkans and the Kosovo civil war. Furthermore, a fact to be accentuated is that in the wars of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, many members of a nation or citizens of a political system were faced with different armies. Poland and Czechoslovakia with their legionaries’ tradition are two examples of many. In total it was also the significance that was attributed to the Second World War, which was Eastern Europe specific. The ‘Fight against Fascism’ obtained systemic relevance in the Communist era and conferred to the Soviet domination a special legitimacy as ‘Liberator’.



### **Veteran Care and War Victims' Policy in Eastern Europe: Comparative Perspective**

The mentioned features indicate common aspects of the war victims' and veterans' policy in Eastern Europe. To them belong, that the starting point was outlined as either nation foundation wars – which apply to Czechoslovakia (First and Second World War), Poland (after the First World War) and Kosovo –, or state foundation wars such as the Russian civil war, Tito's partisans war during the Second World War and the liberation war of Kosovo from 1996 to 1999. In these cases, an internal discussion took place on the participation on the 'right' side, which in Poland during the interwar period led to bloody demonstrations. These discussions were suggestive of the further position of the veterans in the new state, as in all investigated countries, so long as they actually stood on the 'right' side; they belonged to the political elite. The 'legionaries' in Poland supported the state president Piłsudski, but also after his death in 1935, when a military junta was installed, they remained influential. As well in Czechoslovakia the veterans of the legion, returning from Russia, were placed in high administrative bodies. Tito, a partisan himself, nearly exclusively recruited from his comrades-in-arms for the first socialist Yugoslavian government. After the last Yugoslavian War Kosovo's liberation fighters, veterans of the Yugoslavian People's Army and their organisations displayed a correspondingly high self-awareness in these countries. These new collective mentalities have, without having experienced great change, survived the system transformation of the 1990s and also shaped the present.

The involvement of the veterans in politics also guided the war commemoration in all states, which clearly fell to the advantage of the winning fraction; veterans of the Habsburg army were marginalised in Poland and Czechoslovakia; whereas the 'Anti-Fascist' campaign in the Soviet Union and in Yugoslavia was an exclusive scene. In both of these countries, the Second World War received a state legitimising significance, that should not be underestimated, and produced consequences vis-à-vis the veterans' policy. After the Second World War, in a style of propaganda, all Soviet satellite states would refer to the heroic struggle for independence.

A further aspect that applies to the investigated states as well as to Western Europe is the reintegration strategies from the state side as well as from the veteran side. The classical care and protection strategies consisted of the allocation of financial compensation and of pension payments. The rule was however, that a state should orient on the further application of veteran and war disabled labour force, and to try to make them serviceable for the economy again. In Czechoslovakia as well as in Poland, after the First World War, there was a continuity of Habsburg tradition in which tobacco monopolies were preferably given to veterans.

After the First World War basically the same solution approaches were established in Poland, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia as well as for the Western European countries, yet when it comes to the Soviet Union, there is a completely different understanding of statehood, citizenship and rights and duties of citizens. With this view on war victims'

and veterans' policy, our knowledge is thereby also deepened on socialist welfare statehood. The comparison of contributions hereby shows, that among all the investigated countries, the Soviet Union legitimised social policy the least. In the foreground of politics there was much more focus on the right to and the duty of work. Except for this specific logic, the Soviet Union had very little understanding for the situation of veterans. The care for war victims was miserable; veterans' association were only able to have their voice heard in the 1980s.

With the Sovietisation of the Central Eastern European countries, the Soviet style model was implemented in specific ways. At the same time, in the so-called people's democracy the traditions of the interwar period and to an extent even those at the turn of the century, still played a role. The question of who fought on the 'right' side, in the context of the proclaimed Anti Fascist campaign and the Stalinist enemy marking, no longer only decided the measure of care, but also application and promotion prospects, deportation and partly life and death. The associations then had to form themselves in an Anti Fascist victims' association and had hardly any scope for action until the 1950s. Yugoslavia thereby took on a special position. Especially revealing is that also here in the early Socialist era, the war victims' association possessed incredible influence.

Veterans' policy in Western as well as Eastern Europe was not just a matter of domestic policy. In the Treaty of Versailles and in the Convention of Rome in 1922, the successor states of the Habsburg monarchy were obligated to care for the former Habsburg civil servants and military personnel. In Kosovo, it was the UNMIK mandate that tried to exert influence on the veterans' policy. In all cases it is remarkable that it remained with international statements of opinion, despite which did not have policy realisation as consequence. Integration strategies for the veterans consisted, after their demobilisation, furthermore of strengthening their political presence by creating organisations. War Victims' and Veterans' Associations were created in national as well as international frameworks. To this end, *CIAMAC* (*Conférence Internationale des Associations de Mutilés et Anciens Combattants*/International Consortium of War Victims' and Veterans' Associations) was founded, to which Polish, Czechoslovakian and Yugoslavian organisations participated. From the beginning many organisation from Western and Eastern European states belonged to the World Veterans Federation founded in 1950; Yugoslavia as an observer. The general state of research on these actors is bad. The participation of Eastern European associations becomes understandable with the Polish, Czechoslovakian, as well as Yugoslavian example.

The Kosovo example is astonishing in comparison to the World Wars insofar, as here international organisations followed a logic that clearly does not lie within a European tradition. Claims by the veterans on political influence and on social services were rejected. The ideology of liberation, that could legitimate an increasingly Kosovan nation, was thereby overrun. The corresponding arguments are evident in the manner of establishment, as to how the Kosovo liberation war was perceived by the European public. Different as for the First and Second World War, this war did not affect the continent as such and was not seen as a common experience. In analogy, the influence increased of

the international actors. This can be seen as a lesson learned from the previous wars. At the same time the comparative materials show, that the recognition of the war veterans' claims was of fundamental importance after the First World War as they were a stabilisation for the post war regime – especially there where the war was considered a war for nation establishment. This function in principle remained after the Second World War, also when it now more clearly excluded by definition more veterans.