

Transnational Knowledge into Yugoslav Practices? The Legacy of the Second World War on Social Welfare Policy in Yugoslavia

Heike Karge

RESÜMEE

Das Sozialfürsorgesystem im sozialistischen Jugoslawien war eng an die herrschende Staatsideologie geknüpft. Ein aus dem Zweiten Weltkrieg in Jugoslawien abgeleitetes Anrecht auf staatliche Fürsorge und Unterstützung wurde nur denjenigen bzw. deren Hinterbliebenen gewährt, die auf der „richtigen Seite“ versehrt oder getötet worden waren, jenen also, die den jugoslawischen Volksbefreiungskrieg unterstützt oder ihm wenigstens nicht feindlich gegenübergestanden hatten. Der Beitrag diskutiert die Rolle des jugoslawischen Veteranenbundes (*Savez Boraca u Narodnooslobodilačkom ratu*, SBNOR) in der Konturierung dieses Sozialfürsorgediskurses, dies insbesondere in Bezug auf seine aus ehemaligen Partisanen und Unterstützern der Volksbefreiungsbewegung bestehenden Verbandsmitglieder. Vor allem ein schwieriger Balanceakt steht dabei im Vordergrund – die Frage der Anerkennung überlebender ehemaliger Deportierter und Internierter als „Teilnehmer des Volksbefreiungskrieges“, denn die betreffenden Diskussionen zeigen, dass der jugoslawische Veteranenbund nicht isoliert von internationalen Diskursen agierte. Vielmehr soll im Beitrag akzentuiert werden, auf welchen Wegen im jugoslawischen Veteranenbund versucht wurde, transnational kommuniziertes Wissen in jugoslawische Praktiken zu überführen.

With respect to the “People’s Liberation War”, as the Second World War was called in socialist Yugoslavia, the word “veteran” was not part of official terminology. However, there were organizational as well as socio-judicial mechanisms aimed at the collection and identification of people who, in a wider sense, would belong to this category. In the following I will discuss who was considered a “fighter”, a “disabled ex-serviceman” and a “victim of fascist terror” in post-war Yugoslavia. These three major categories constituted

a basic state-addressed claim for social and financial support as a consequence of the war. While former soldiers and disabled ex-servicemen could also rely on an organizational association, the surviving “victims of fascist terror” and their bereaved formed a non-organizational group, which consisted of civil victims of the war who did not partake in any military actions. All three groups were tightly interwoven with each other – on the one hand through the national and republican legislation and on the other hand through activities of the Yugoslav Combatants’ Union. Therefore, the activities of this Yugoslavian union for the first one and a half post-war decades are the focal point of this article. This was a period in which social tasks with respect to all survivors of the war, namely the reintegration of former fighters, care for the families of fallen soldiers, for war invalids and the victims of fascist terror were of highest priority. In particular, the existing inclusion and exclusion strategies in Yugoslavia will be discussed, which decided who had a right to claim social and financial recognition for the efforts respectively sacrifices made during the war, and who was not entitled to do so. Furthermore, the connection to simultaneous discourses of transnationally acting organizations such as the *Fédération Internationale des Résistants* (FIR) will be pointed out. This is of importance because both the fighters’ legislation (*borачko zakonodavstvo*) as well as the judicial agreements relating to surviving civil victims of war were in sync with specifics of Yugoslav politics of memory (and forgetting). However, they did not act in a field which was self-sufficient or isolated from international influences. Especially the difficult balancing act of acknowledging the surviving former deportees and internees as “participants of the People’s Liberation War”, which started in Yugoslavia at the end of the 1950s, shows this problem from a perspective which is characterized by attempts – even if subtle ones – to transfer transnationally communicated knowledge into Yugoslav practices.

Legal Regulations

As early as the end of the war, the Yugoslav government passed a series of laws which aimed at facilitating the return to a peaceful environment; at least for some parts of the population. Two different types of laws were enacted: on the one hand those addressing former soldiers and their relatives, and on the other hand those addressing the civil victims of the war and their relatives – in other words, the so-called “victims of fascism”. The first exclusively referred to the rights of soldiers, war invalids and the families of fallen soldiers. Consequently, this fighters’ legislation constituted the actual legal regulation for the war veterans, – a summary label which, however, was not used in Yugoslavia to subsume these sub-categories – their families and the bereaved. Also the “victims of fascism” had – though as a civil category – a legal entitlement to social security and support.

The entire system of entitlement to state care, as derived from the war, was based on the principle criteria of ideological priority over the actual social distress of each Yugoslav citizen. This was the case since the state only granted social welfare to those who fought,

survived, had been disabled or were killed on the “right side” – either as a fighter in the Yugoslav partisan movement or as a victim killed by the “fascist occupying forces and their supporters.” All the others were a priori excluded from these state-funded benefits. The first laws were established in 1945: the demobilization law as well as the law regarding agricultural reform and colonization. It was only the demobilized fighters of the communist-led partisan units and of the “People’s Liberation Army of Yugoslavia” who profited from the demobilization law.¹ As a law enforcement activity, the state made 16 billion Dinars available in the first five years following the war. With the help of these funds, demobilized soldiers were supported in building new homes and in searching for jobs by local Peoples’ Liberation Committees (*narodnooslobodilački odbori*).² The law with regard to agricultural reform and colonization helped not only the former soldiers, but also the surviving victims of fascist terror with the allocation of land and farm.³ The law on war invalids already followed in May 1946 and it solidified the foundation of protection and care for the invalids and their families. This law did not only apply to invalids of the People’s Liberation War and their bereaved but also to those of “the Balkan Wars, World War One, the war from April 1941, the National Liberation War and to Yugoslav citizens who became disabled in allied armies during the last World War, the Spanish War or the October Revolution and the Ilinden Uprising in Macedonia, as well as to those foreigners who fought in the People’s Liberation War and became disabled.”⁴ The National Ministry of Defence was responsible for the execution of the law until 1948, afterwards civil welfare institutions were in charge of it. According to the law, beneficiaries were on the one hand, “active combatants who either directly participated in military units or outside of them in organizations of the hinterland aimed at the organization of combat or who participated in combat and returned being crippled, sick or suffering [sic!].” On the other hand, “the families of those who fell or died at the front whilst performing their military duties or who were reported missing and the families of deceased disabled ex-service men who were disabled to at least 50 percent” belonged to this group as well.⁵

1 Narodnooslobodilačka Vojska Jugoslavije, in 1951 the name was changed to Jugoslovenska Narodna Armija.

2 These funds were made available from the federal budget. O narednim zadacima boračkih organizacija. Referat na četvrtom kongresu SUBNORJ, A. Ranković, 28.6.1961, Croatian State Archive (HR-HDA), 1241/2, SUBNORJ, RO, 1961, kut. 287, b.b.: 24.

3 Zakon o agrarnoj reformi i kolonizaciji, Službeni List DFJ 64/1945, 28.8.1945, paragraph 16/1: “A preferential right on the allocation of land is given to agricultural workers without land or to ones with insufficient land, who were fighters of the partisan units, the National Liberation Army and the Yugoslav partisan units and the Yugoslav army, to invalids of the War of Liberation as well as to invalids of former wars (1912–1918 and April 1941), to the families and orphans of fallen soldiers of the War of Liberation and to the victims and families of victims of fascist terror. Among the fighters, especially old fighters and volunteers are to be considered.”

4 Gesetzgebung in Jugoslawien, Internationale Studientage über die Gesetzgebung und die Rechte der Widerstandskämpfer, Brüssel 22.–23.10.1955, Documentation Centre of Austrian Resistance (DÖW), FIR Library, no. 5048, 52–56, here: 53.

5 I only have a few figures. In 1953 (due date 31.12.) 321,244 persons drew after the war invalids’ law a pension (war invalids and the bereaved). See *ibid.*, 52. In 1961, 63,248 war invalids were counted in the whole of Yugoslavia. O narednim zadacima, A. Ranković, 24 (fn. 2).

The basic rights of the war invalids and of their bereaved consisted of the allocation of pension payments and various forms of subsidies, free medical treatment, free occupational retraining and reintegration into the working environment, discounts for the use of public transportation, priority with respect to employment opportunities and various kinds of further benefits.⁶ In addition to military hospitals which were founded after 1930, invalid homes were established in all parts of the country for medical care and vocational reintegration of the invalids. In 1955, 18 such homes existed in which 21,000 invalids were housed up to that point.

These early laws were successively completed nationwide and additionally specified through republican regulations. In the mid-1950s, seven federal acts finally regulated the legal claims of soldiers, disabled ex-servicemen and the bereaved of fallen soldiers. These acts regulated the war invalids' and the invalids' law, the law regarding pension funds, the medals' law, the law regarding the rights of the bearers of the "partisan badge 1941", the law regarding public service employees and the law on employment relations. Later on, republican laws were enacted which regulated the rights of victims of fascist terror, for example in 1958 and 1959 in the Republics of Serbia, Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. Through these laws, singular or permanent financial aid was made available by communities and executive councils of the republics to the persons concerned.⁷

Thus, all the early social measures originated on behalf of the state's initiative and were partially given over to republican administration as part of state decentralization. Similarly, the foundation of the war invalids' and the combatants' unions were also initiated by the state, which intended these organizations to provide administrative support in the execution and realization of its enacted regulations.

Organizational Structures

The Yugoslav "Combatants' Union of the People's Liberation War" was founded in 1947 as a voluntary union of all participants of the People's Liberation War.⁸ The founding congress of the "Association of war invalids of Yugoslavia" had already taken place two years earlier, in October 1945.⁹ Together with the "Union of reserve officers and non-commissioned officers of Yugoslavia", these organizations constituted the three operating

6 These various kinds of benefits were, for example, favorable loans for house building for certain invalids- and fighter's categories or certain bonus distributions, such as the selling of cars – brand Mosković 407 and 423 – in 1962 to invalids at special conditions. See the corresponding regulations in: Službeni list FNRJ 36 (1962), 5.7.1962. In the following see: Gesetzgebung in Jugoslawien, Internationale Studententage, 53 (fn. 4).

7 Društveni položaj u sistemu socijalne zaštite, HR-HDA, 1241/2, SUBNORH, RO, 1960, kut. 285, b.b.

8 Savez Boraca u Narodnooslobodilačkom ratu. In 1961 the name of the union is changed into Savez Udruženja Boraca u Narodnooslobodilačkom ratu ("Union of the associations of fighters of the People's Liberation War"). In the following just shortly: combatants union. In 1949 the union had about 1,1 million members, in 1960 the number dropped to about 900.000 which might be due to administrative restructuring of the communities in course of the decentralization. O narednim zadacima, A. Ranković, 20 (fn. 2).

9 Udruženje ratnih vojnih invalida Jugoslavije, after 1948 called Savez ratnih vojnih invalida Jugoslavije ("Union of war invalids of Yugoslavia").

combatants' unions in Yugoslavia. In 1961 all three organizations were unified into one combatants' union.¹⁰ The combatants' union as well as the union of war invalids were first and foremost patriotic associations to serve the new communist state. Just as other socio-political organizations in Yugoslavia after 1945, both these associations acted under constant supervision of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia (as of November 1952 the League of Communists of Yugoslavia). The principle tasks of the combatants' union are stated in the founding statute of 1947: working on the protection and consolidation concerning the legacy of the People's Liberation War, on the consolidation of world peace, on the upholding and development of the traditions of the People's Liberation War, keeping alive the memories of "heroic fights and heroes of the People's Liberation War"; and finally social tasks, cultural and educational work, the development of patriotism within the population, and the representation abroad of the People's Liberation War as part of the European anti-fascist resistance movement.¹¹

Although the financial and social situation in Yugoslavia was extraordinarily tense during the immediate post-war period, the field of social tasks which were managed in the combatants' union by sections and commissions, solely established for that purpose, was at least in the statute less important.¹² This was by no means caused – as one could assume – by the fact that the majority of social tasks was not managed here, but by the union of war invalids.

Quite the contrary, social activities were of utmost importance within the combatants' union during the 1950s.¹³ But from a governmental point of view, both organizations had in common, that they were not supposed to campaign for the rights of their members but solely to ensure the administrative execution of these rights.¹⁴ This position assumes that the state itself had already taken care of the fighters, invalids and victims. This was

10 However, just a short time afterwards, in 1969, the Union of reserve officers and non-commissioned officers was again outsourced and formed an independent organization, which I will not further discuss in this paper. The successor organization of the Yugoslav War Invalid's Union, the "Association of war invalids of Serbia – participants of the People's Liberation War" (Udruženje Ratnih vojnih invalida Srbije-učesnika NOR) announces on its internet platform that reasons behind the outsourcing were "differences in interests, competences and working methods". The Serbian association of invalids which was renewed in 1993 changed its name in 1995 into "Association of war and peacetime military invalids of Serbia" (Udruženje ratnih i mirnodopskih vojnih invalida Srbije). See the official internet platform of the association, <http://www.udruzenjermvisrbije.rs/>.

11 The order of the tasks assigned corresponds to statute. Statut, § 2, Osnivački kongres SBNOR, Arhiv Srbije i Crne Gore (ASCG) 297-1-b.b.1947, 43.

12 The term for the corresponding commissions varied from republic to republic. For Croatia the following commissions were especially relevant: "Welfare commission for the children of fallen fighters and the victims of fascist terror" (in 1960 renamed "Commission for the education and employment of the fighters, war invalids, children of the fallen fighters and the victims of fascist terror"), the socio-economic sections and commissions for financial, health and social questions of the fighters and war invalids, the commission for housing issues etc. The Croatian combatants union founded a commission of war invalids after the merger of the combatants union and the Union of Invalids which was united with the above-mentioned commission for financial, health and social questions in 1986.

13 See in detail: Heike Karge, *Steinerne Erinnerung – versteinerte Erinnerung? Kriegsgedenken in Jugoslawien (1974–1970)*, Wiesbaden 2010, 41–54.

14 "In our country there is no need that former fighters of the People's Liberation War fight for a fair legislation and for satisfactory state regulations." I. Gošnjak, Osnivački kongres SBNOR, 20 (fn. 11)

to fundamentally mark off the combatants' union from comparable former organizations of war veterans which were – in the socialist jargon – in the hands of “reactionary elements”.¹⁵ Beyond this socialist rhetoric, the foundation of the combatants' union as well as the early initiated veterans' legislation undoubtedly marked a first considerable step towards the development of profound governmental care in Yugoslavia. This separated the early communist Yugoslavia not only from interwar Yugoslavia, but also already from the “big brother” USSR, with whom it came to a breach just a year after the foundation of the combatants' union.¹⁶

But for all that, the Yugoslav legislation was far away from welfare principles based on equal rights for its citizens. The veterans' legislation supported the creation of a socio-political two-tier society, in which the entitlement to state care only derived from the point of surviving or dying on the “right side”. However, the veterans' legislation was only one part of the state-provided social security system which was developed in Yugoslavia after 1945. A further and much larger element of this system was the social security and pension insurance, which becomes more interesting at this point, since both these provision schemes, which were directly linked to employment, were also provided with a further disqualifying criterion.¹⁷

Whereas in the frame of the veterans' legislation, a supposed shared attitude (*Gesinnungsgemeinschaft*) *at* war decided on later claims for care; the entitlement to social security and pension insurance linked to employment required a supposed shared attitude *after* the war. Because the “Law for Social Security of the workers, employees and civil servants”, which came into force in 1947, excluded over 20 years all those who were not employed in the state-run and socialist (as of 1950 the self-governing) sector. This, therefore, affected primarily the independent small businessmen as well as single farmers.¹⁸ The fact that Yugoslavia had an agricultural population structure, as well as the drastic increase of single farmers after the breaking off of the collectivization at the beginning of the 1950s, implied that a large part of the Yugoslav population was not covered by this system of social security and pension insurance. Thus, the acquisition of pension entitlements in the frame of the veterans' legislation – that is pension rights linked to certain wartime activities – might have become much more important. At this point, decisive possibilities, parallel to the legal pension insurance, opened up for members of the invalids' and combatants' union.

15 Ranković mentions here the former „Union of volunteers”, *ibid.*, A. Ranković, 12 (fn. 11). The “Union of volunteers of the Kingdom of Serbia” (*Savez dobrovoljaca Kraljevine Srbije*) was founded in 1903. After 1945 the union, now called “Union of war volunteers 1912–1918” (*Saveza ratnih dobrovoljaca 1912–1918*) continued its work and was finally forbidden in 1947, the founding year of the combatants union. The war invalids also had a forerunner organization. It was the “Association of war invalids of Yugoslavia” (*Udruženje ratnih invalida Jugoslavije*) which was founded in 1919 in Slavonski Brod.

16 About the USSR see the article by Edele in this volume.

17 For the pension scheme in Yugoslavia see: Vlado Puljiz, *Mirovinski sustav*, V. Puljiz, Gojko Bežovan et al., *Socijalna politika Hrvatske*, Zagreb 2008, 73–98.

18 *Ibid.*, 82.

Those who returned from the war disabled could claim a disability pension through the medically established invalidity, as long as there was a physical handicap of at least 20 percent. As mentioned above, the bereaved of fallen or missing soldiers were given the same entitlements. However, according to which criteria were the claims for care and pension decided for the non-disabled, or at least not physically disabled, surviving soldiers? Solely the membership in the combatants' union did not entitle to file any claims – this entitlement was based on additional criteria – but the title of a “combatant” or “member of the People's Liberation War” provided the basis for such a claim. However, this is where the difficulties began, as the title of the combatants' union was misleading in itself as it was not a pure union of people who were militarily active during the war. Stated differently, it was not a union of war veterans in the traditional sense. As the founding charter from 1947 pointed out, all those who actively participated in the People's Liberation Movement – with a weapon in their hands – or actively supported it through other means had the right to become a member of the combatants' union.¹⁹ Consequently, the membership in this organization was primarily not based on military criteria but rather on ideological ones.²⁰ The legal requirements to obtain a pension claim based on the veterans' legislation were arranged according to these criteria, too. Here, all those, who had served in the military during the People's Liberation War, and to whom their active and organized work for the People's Liberation Movement was recognized as an “exceptional period of service of twice the length” by the pension service, were entitled to receive a pension. To gain this recognition, it was for a long time decisive for former fighters to prove their entering into battle prior to September 9, 1943.²¹ Meanwhile, the decisive and oftentimes controversial criterion for recognition with respect to former deportees, internees and prisoners of war was their “active and organized work”, their visible contribution to the ideas of the People's Liberation Movement made in the camps and prisons in wartime Yugoslavia and abroad.

Approaches to former deportees and internees in Yugoslavia and abroad

In December 1951, four years after the foundation of the combatants' union, the section of deportees and internees, as well as the section of former prisoners of war were founded

19 The founding charter defined that everybody could become a member who either “fought with a weapon in his hand among the glorious Partisan Units, the People's Liberation and the Yugoslav army,” who “actively supported the People's Liberation Movement,” who “ended up in prison, in internment or forced labor because of his active support of the People's Liberation Movement and showed adequate behavior of a people's fighter” (narodni borac), who “whilst he was imprisoned always stayed true to the People's Liberation Movement and actively worked on the diffusion of its ideas,” and, finally, each Yugoslav citizen who “fought with a weapon in his hand against fascism outside of the country.” Statut, Osnivački kongres SBNOR, 43 (fn. 11).

20 Accordingly, the passage stating “the weapon in the hand” which was used in the founding statute was deleted in 1955. Instead, it was stated that everybody who “had participated in the People's Liberation War” could become a member. See: Zaključci, in: Glavni Odbor SB NORH, ed., Treći kongres SBNORH. Zagreb 1957, 112–117, here: 112.

21 Društveni položaj (fn. 7).

as part of the combatants' union.²² Unsurprisingly, the Yugoslav section of deportees and internees was not a reservoir for the surviving victims of the camps, but instead it was exclusively a section for those deportees and internees who were given the attribute "political" by being able to prove active and organized work for the People's Liberation Movement in the camps. Only those who succeeded in this had the right to membership in the combatants' union and could accordingly file a claim for benefits under the veterans' legislation. Consequently, many of the former camp inmates were excluded. Even as late as 1960, the following statement was made at the first Yugoslav federal conference of former political prisoners, deportees and internees:

A further question which needs to be addressed is the definition of political work in the camp because we very often argue when we debate the acceptance of [social] rights of the fighters for our comrades. [...] It is about time, comrades, that we clarify what is being considered as organized work. According to the regulations, it needs to be confirmed that somebody has done organized work. Not everywhere was it this easy to do organized work, especially not in [the former Concentration Camp] Jasenovac, where the situation changed on a daily or even hourly basis.²³

Despite this narrow containment of a potential pension entitlement for deportees, the foundation of this section would have decisive consequences later on: While the section worked very weakly in the first years and was barely present in the Yugoslav public, the subject matter of deportees and internees perceptibly intensified in the combatants' union in the second half of the 1950s. Here, a close relationship to the foundation of transnationally active organizations – such as the International Camp Committees (ICC) or the FIR – can be assumed.²⁴ Though, until 1956 Yugoslavia avoided the cooperation with the ICCs because of their alleged close ties to the FIR (which, in turn, was under strong influence of Eastern European states); in May 1956 the executive committee of the combatants' unions' central committee suddenly decided "to allow the section of former internees, in the future, to communicate with these international committees, to participate in their work and possibly become a member."²⁵ Shortly afterwards, in September 1957, even Bertolini, the then secretary of the FIR, was welcomed by the combatants' union for an informal conversation to discuss the participation of Yugoslavian

22 Sednica Izvršnog odbora Centralnog Odbora SUBNOR-a, Zaključci, 26.12.1951, ASCG-297-17-b.b.

23 F. Ajanović, Stenografske beleške, Savezna konferencija bivših političkih zatvorenika, interniraca i deportiraca, 8.5.1960, ASCG-297-19-b.b.

24 FIR stands for the "International Federation of Resistance Fighters, Victims and Prisoners of Fascism" founded in 1951. The foundation members were national associations of veterans and of those (politically) persecuted from Albania, Bulgaria, the CSSR and the USSR, as well as West Germany, Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France (and Trieste). Additionally, associate members with observer status were Spain, Greece and Yugoslavia. The Italian Resistenza federations joined shortly after. The name of the federation was changed into "International Federation of Resistance Fighters" in accordance with the resolution of the second congress of the FIR on November 28, 1954. Statuten der FIR, DÖW, FIR Library, no. 1220 A, 3.

25 Prošireni plenum, Centralni odbor SUBNOR, Izveštaj o radu Organizacije SBNOR-a od trećeg kongresa, 23.1.1958, ASCG-297-2-b.b.

representatives at selected activities of the FIR, such as the medical congress aimed at the investigation of the effects of war among internees.²⁶ In February 1960, the central committee of the combatants' union ultimately welcomed for the first time a representative of the International Auschwitz Committee, namely its long standing secretary general Hermann Langbein.²⁷

So what was the reason for the sudden increase in interest concerning the needs of the deportees and internees? Was it because of the dissolution of the Cominform in 1956, an organization which was supposed to have a strong influence on the FIR and the ICCs, which in turn kept Yugoslavia from cooperation with the latter?²⁸ This might have been the decisive reason but hardly the motive. Rather one could assume that the Yugoslav decision for paying more attention to deportees and internees in the international arena was due to the fact that the problems of those groups became apparent in Yugoslavia itself. For, the Yugoslav public was confronted with specific and foremost mental health problems of these deportees and internees since the mid-1950s.

Already in 1957, at a session of the main committee of the combatants' union dealing with the sections of deportees and internees it was mentioned that "the state of health amongst internees was very bad."²⁹ In May 1960, at the first federal conference of the deportees and internees one participant from Bosnia and Herzegovina insisted that the "social question" of internees became increasingly urgent as more and more of them had become "mentally sick". Yet, nothing had been done so far to discuss this problem.³⁰

*But if nothing will be done here these people will become – and part of them already did – a social problem for our society – they will become alcoholics, act unmorally etc.*³¹

Eventually the topic of mentally sick deportees and internees was discussed at the department for international cooperation of the combatants' union. Neda Božinović, a member of the international department said in November 1962:

[...] and secondly, we are suddenly facing the problem of investigations concerning the long-term consequences of war (medical research). We have seen on several sessions that these are coming to light and we need to get more seriously and intensely engaged. The statements demonstrate that the consequences of war are increasingly surfacing and this

26 Ibid.

27 Stenografske beleške, Sednica Centralnog odbora SUBNOR-a s Hermann Langbajnom, Generalni sekretar Medjunarodnog logorskog komiteta, 23.2.1960, ASCG-297-4.b.b.

28 At the request of the Soviet communists the Yugoslav communists were excluded in 1948 from the Cominform (Communist Information bureau).

29 V. Gligorić, Stenografske beleške, Sednica Izvršnog odbora Centralnog odbora SBNOR-a, 14.3.1957, ASCG-297-17-b.b.

30 „[...] That is why we have a lot of mentally sick people and often we meet people on the street who suffer from this. For a long time these people did not get any attention.” B. Karabegović, Stenografske beleške, Savezna konferencija (fn. 23).

31 Ibid.

*has to be taken into consideration and especially because of the fact that this problem is also on the international agenda.*³²

Of course not only those deportees and internees, who were potentially eligible for pension – the so-called “political” ones – were affected by the long-term consequences of war. Naturally, also those dismissed as “a-political” deportees and internees could suffer the same fate – who, if they did not work in the “socialist sector”, could not claim any pension at all.³³ And by this, the demand for medical-therapeutic care and social security for the persons and families affected really became a very urgent social matter. Therefore, it probably is no coincidence that in 1959, sections of deportees and internees were finally founded in all republics and provinces of Yugoslavia. Up to this point it was only the federal section, located in Belgrade at the main committee of the combatants’ union, which took care of this work with five members.³⁴

Here it is striking that internationally, the topic of psychological consequences of the war was too more and more emphasized. While comparing the resolutions of, for example the third (1959) and forth (1962) congress of the FIR, it becomes evident that “damages to health” were increasingly more at the centre of attention.³⁵ The statute of the forth congress even discussed a “special pathology of resistance fighters, deportees and political detainees”.³⁶

Yugoslavia – even if one assumes that Yugoslavia probably did not actively shape this discourse of the FIR – at least must have perceived the discourse actively by all means.³⁷ And by doing so, three findings must have been striking from the point of view of the Yugoslav combatants’ union: Firstly, that the long-term effects of war were a global phenomenon; secondly, that this phenomenon was loudly raised by international organiza-

32 N.Božinović, Stenografske beleške, Sastanak u Centralnom odboru SUBNORJ, 22.11.1962, ASCG-297-15-b.b.

33 And of course also the fighters suffered from these delayed effects of the war: “A special problem are the people who wander around in Belgrade with a badge and a certificate, and a problem are also the people who are in a neuropathic clinic – who, if you release them do not have a place they can go to [...]. Slovenia has carried out a survey and it came out that the relative majority of inmates in the clinics for mental patients and the neuropathic clinics is made up of former fighters.” Božinović mentions that a commission has been founded in Slovenia which takes care of former fighters; whereas in Bosnia, where the problem was of utmost importance, there did not exist a commission, there were even no neuropathic clinics. N. Božinović, Stenografske beleške sastanka Sekretarijata, 29.5.1957, ASCG-297-15-b.b.

34 N. Božinović, Stenografske beleške, Sednica Izvršnog odbora (fn. 29).

35 Both resolutions contain the paragraph „Defence of rights of resistance fighters and victims of Fascism and Nazism”. In 1959 it says: “Hundreds of thousands of women and men died in concentration camps and prisons. Others came back from fights and Nazi imprisonment as invalids sick and weak.” In 1962 it states: “The survivors came all back with severe damages and many of them are sick and invalid.” Beschlüsse des dritten Kongresses der FIR, 20.-22.3.1959, Statuten, Leitende Körperschaften, Aktions- und Orientierungsprogramm der FIR, DÖW, FIR Library, no. 1778 A, 18, and Statuten, Leitende Körperschaften, Aktions- und Orientierungsprogramm der FIR, Vierter Kongress, 13.-16.12.1962, DÖW, FIR Library, no. 2162 A, 18.

36 Statuten, Vierter Kongress, 19 (fn. 35).

37 „Here I think especially of [...] the International Federation of Resistance Movements with which we make contacts and develop a cooperation, particularly after 1958, after the obstacles were mainly gone that stood in the way of mutual cooperation. Although we are not members formally, the relationship to this international organization is very good. The combatants union operates actively in almost every of its institutions and international actions.” O narednim zadacima, A. Ranković (fn. 2).

tions that represented resistance fighters and victims of the camps while the same matter was concealed in Yugoslavia; and finally, that, under these conditions, the deportees and internees in these international organizations were given much more room and recognition than they had been given in Yugoslavia up to this point.

Now Yugoslavia was to follow this move – however in its own way. Until today, we know only very little about psychiatric and medical care for mentally damaged fighters and deportees before the end of the 1950s and afterwards.³⁸ Put differently, we have little knowledge about the development from 1945, when the “partisan neurosis” was diagnosed as a specifically Yugoslav phenomenon, up to the modern medical-psychiatric diagnosis of post-traumatic stress disorder, which can nowadays be found in diagnoses for both perpetrators and victims of the Yugoslav wars of secession of the 1990s.³⁹ However, a development which can be traced already today is the sudden inclusion into the combatants’ union, of large parts of those who had been excluded before – as a result of the perception of the occurring deportees’ problems. Thus, Ranković argues already in 1957 with respect to the yet-to-be-created republican sections of deportees and internees:

I think that all those can become a member in these organizations who have not shown a hostile attitude in the camp in one way or another. Those who acted in a neutral way, who were active neither on one side nor the other, should also belong to this organization in my opinion because it is a fact that they were nevertheless also a victim, made these sacrifices and did not soil themselves [...].⁴⁰

Similarly, a further leadership member of the combatants’ union, Velimir Stojnić, confirmed three years later, in 1960, on the first federal conference of deportees and internees, that:

We know that those [deportees and internees] who fought actively are at the same time members of the combatants union. [...] In the discussions which were held recently, it was believed that all those who spent their time in the camp or in prison and hereby behaved correctly towards the enemy and did not soil themselves – regardless of whether they were working actively – could become a member in these sections. [...] In my opinion, this

38 At least it can be noted that the efforts to care for the mentally disabled resulted in the construction of new care centers at the beginning of the 1960s. In Sarajevo, an additional building next to the neuropsychiatric institution was constructed with a capacity of 50 beds around 1960 on the initiative and the support of the main committee of the combatants union of Bosnia and Herzegovina. B. Karabegović, *Stenografske beleške, Savzna konferencija* (fn. 23). In the work schedule of the Croatian combatants union, the foundation of a center for psychoneurotics is envisioned for 1964 in cooperation with the secretaries of social policy and national health. The reasoning is as follows: “The necessity of this establishment’s foundation is due to the diffusion of alcoholism and psychoneuroses in the combatants union which is a result of the long-term effects of war and of the abuse of people in prisons and camps.” Plan rada Predsjedništva i komisija SUBNOR Hrvatske za narednih šest meseci, 1.10.1963, HR-HDA, 1241/2, SUBNORH, RO, kut. 291, b.b.

39 The partisan neurosis was diagnosed by psychoanalyst Hugo Klajn in 1945, who treated 150 mentally-ill partisans in the military hospital of Belgrade between 1944 and 1945. Up to 1955 his book on the partisan neurosis was not allowed to be published in Yugoslavia. See now as a new edition with a foreword by Žarko Trebješanin: Hugo Klajn, *Ratna Neuroza Jugoslovena*, Beograd 1995.

40 A. Ranković, *Stenografske beleške, Sednica Izvršnog odbora* (fn. 29).

*view is correct as the section has to be an organization for all these people who were in the camps during the most difficult days of our history because this was a struggle for life and death.*⁴¹

During a federal conference of former prisoners of war, which also took place in 1960, Ranković was to finally put this guideline into very clear terms: Having been in a camp, in a prison or in war captivity and *not having acted against* the People's Liberation Movement was to be considered from now on as if this person had *participated* in the movement.⁴² When in 1965 the fifth congress of the combatants' union met, the passage on "active and organized work" was not featured anymore in the membership regulation of the then adopted statute. So now, in fact, the right to become a member in the combatants' union was negatively defined, since nothing more than the absence of hostile attitudes with respect to the People's Liberation Movement was required. Consequently, the resolution of the congress contently declared that the economic and social situation of the participants of the People's Liberation War had improved due to an extension to "new categories of participants of the war" (*nove kategorije učesnika rata*).⁴³ These rulings must have been far reaching for the previously so called "non-political" deportees and internees, prisoners of war and others, who, as newly acknowledged participants of the war, could now verify their entitlement to pensions and other social measures. It is still an open question, however, how many people really did profit from these measures.

41 V. Stojnić, Stenografske beleške, Savezna konferencija (fn. 23).

42 „Comrade Ranković has expressed that, so far, there was not enough room in the organization for all those who were in war captivity and did not actively fight in the camp etc. against the People's Liberation Movement. Also, he stated that a more tolerant point of view needed to be adapted with respect to those who did not distinguish themselves in the People's Liberation Movement and who were indecisive but later on returned to the country because these persons too were victims of fascist aggression and terror because they were in war captivity. Consequently, these persons should also be acknowledged as members of the People's Liberation Movement in the camps.” Stenografske beleške, Savezna konferencija bivših ratnih zarobljenika, 24.4.1960, ASCG-297-19-38/60.

43 Materijali Petog Kongresa SUBNOR, Zaključci, 30.9.1965, S. 76, ASCG-297-1-b.b.