

SUMMARY

In commemoration of the Vukovar 1991 Remembrance Day in 2021, Ivo Pilar Institute of Social Sciences had organized traditional scientific and professional conference „Vukovar '91: Thirty Years Later: Gift in Gratitude to Freedom – Identities, Memories, History“. This 24th conference has marked both the 30th anniversary of the Battle of Vukovar and the anniversary of the Institute's establishment in 1991. Those special occasions were supported by several Croatian institutions (Office of the President, Croatian Government, Croatian Radio Station in Vukovar and *Vukovar Newspapers*) and president of Croatia, Mr. Zoran Milanović. Conference was organized in cooperation with Croatian Catholic University, in virtual (on-line) setting due to COVID-19 Pandemics on November 15-16, 2021. The conference was managed by the Vukovar Regional Centre in Vukovar. Next to Croatian participants, those from abroad have discussed various issues and topics related to the subject in question, so this Book of Proceedings is structured in four sections containing presented conference papers.

The first section of the Book of Proceedings titled *Vukovar '91 – History* is comprised of three presented papers: *Demographics of Vukovar in the Pre-War, War and Post-War Context (1991 – 2021)* by Dražen Živić, *The Battle of Vukovar in the Serbian Orthodox Church Press* by Anto Mikić, and *Vukovar 1991 in the Hungarian Press* by Ladislav (Lazsló) Heke. In his paper, *Dražen Živić* shows to what extent demographic destruction of Vukovar is evident from thirty years of aggregated data, vital and migration statistics and the most recent (2021) population census. He has expressed concerns about real population perspectives due to insufficient political, social, and economic care for the city and its citizens regardless of expected global, national, and/or local stakeholders' upkeep of Vukovar's needs. *Anto Mikić*'s study of the most important religious newspaper – *The Orthodoxy* – published by the Serbian Orthodox Church – discusses newspaper's writing about the war in Croatia in 1991. Studying articles published in the second half of 1991 through content analysis methodology, he provides an insight into newspaper's subjects related to the war and war casualties and the way information was presented to the public. Mikić's research questions were focused on newspaper articles reporting

about public statements of church dignitaries, namely to what extent did they call for peace, coexistence, ecumenical dialogue; and how much of what they have promoted was related to impossibility of coexistence with Catholics, Croats, and others. In general, he wanted to show how Orthodox church dignitaries have called for „the defense of the endangered Serbian people in Croatia“ and to what degree they were in service of the war rhetoric and propaganda. *Ladislav (Lazslo) Heke's* paper provides an overview of the Hungarian newspaper and media reports (radio and TV) about events in Croatia – from the declaration of independence to its international recognition. Hungarian newspapers and public media have followed with great diligence events in Osijek and Vukovar, as well as in villages populated by Hungarian minority in the vicinity of those two cities. Croatian Homeland War and disintegration of Yugoslavia were focal subjects of not only public media, but of Hungarian foreign policy interest in 1991.

The second section of the Book of Proceedings titled *Vukovar '91 – Memories* contains six papers by following authors: Sanja Špoljar Vržina, Andriana Benčić Kužnar, Mario Bara and Jakov Žižić, Ivana Bendra and Mateo Žanić, and Mirjana Semenić-Rutko. In her paper titled „The Croatian Legacy of Vukovar and the Homeland Defense War – an Anthropological Analysis of Remembering, Forgetting and Memoricide“, *Sanja Špoljar Vržina* begins with the fact how Croats were, at the time of Serbian aggression, exposed to manipulations of their memory while their existence and culture were completely denied. This fact was labeled by Grmek *memoricide* as he tried to explain the attempt to exterminate nations throughout Croatia. While intertwining important measurements of humanity (according to those two authors) in her paper, Sanja Špoljar Vržina emphasizes following remark: it is not a question of whether one remembers or forgets, but whether one supports the process of *self-memoricide* and *moral ignorance* while deciding to condone principal reasons behind geopolitics, progress and (personal) economic gains. There is no progress and no development if the lasting difficulties of the Croatian road to independence are overlooked at expense of Croatian war veterans, their families and citizens who defended themselves building foundations of democratic, non-totalitarian modern Croatia. In her paper titled „The Homeland War Through Memory Politics Prism“, *Andriana Benčić Kužnar* states that there is a need to understand conflicts of memory in memory politics research which requires

explanations and careful consideration of correlation between public and private memory narratives – memory shaped by the public sphere (in schools, museums, and political gestures) and privately shaped memory (by families). Such novel theoretical and empirical approach to politics of memory, based on number of study cases and praxis, enables improved understanding and interpretation of dark and conflicting war histories. Utilizing this approach in her paper, Andriana Benčić Kužnar tries to show, analyze, and interpret Croatia's dark and conflicting past of the 20th century, especially the one related to the Homeland War. The past, history and politics of memory related to the Homeland War in this paper are discussed diachronically and synchronically. Conceptual distinction is introduced between „inherited“ and „recent“ politics of memory even though such concepts are fluid. Her analysis is focused on selected national war symbols and salutations, political speeches and gestures, remembrance days, monuments, and sites of memory, as well as on in-depth interviews and oral histories of direct participants of the war. *Vlasta Novinc*, in her paper „War, Trauma and Reality (testimonial discourse about Vukovar in the intersection of literature and history)“ explores representations of the war reality in testimonial literature about Vukovar, as well as the war and post-war literary discourse narrative strategies used to shape Vukovars' space – as a cultural and imaginary image. War as a traumatic event, according to Vlasta Novinc, appears as a starting point of personal and collective narrative about recent Croatian history. She explores literary boundaries of testimonies in the context of theory of trauma – the ability of literary discourse to represent reality in moments of complete shock, unrecognizability, and inexpressibility, as well as in a more recent moment when events transgress into history and collective memory. In her paper, chronological sequences of a discourse depicting traumatic event are analyzed starting with the source of metonymic expression (wounded city represented as a body) and then followed by the post-traumatic representation of survivors' guilt in some kind of public oblivion and silence about individually committed crimes. In their paper titled „Vojvodina Croats in the Context of Vukovar 1991 and the Battle of Vukovar: Consequences and Memory“, *Mario Bara* and *Jakov Žužić* provide an insight into close connections of the city of Vukovar and neighboring settlements in Bačka and Srijem, as well as migration processes, social and political relations, and ethnical structure of the area in 1991. Next to this, in the second part of

the paper authors discuss the context of Croatian and Serbian relations based on analyzed party activity of the Democratic Alliance of Croats in Vojvodina in Serbian political system and politics. In the following third section they discuss the aggression on the Republic of Croatia – the wider area surrounding Vukovar, and they talk about Croats status in Vojvodina and some of their community members participation in the defense of Vukovar and Croatia. Finally, in the fourth section of their paper, Mario Bara and Jakov Žužić analyze the period after 1991 as they interpret consequences, changes in ethnical composition, circumstances related to (not) fully acquiring minority rights and the question of memory – remembering the 1991 events inside Croatian community in Vojvodina. In the next paper, titled „The Homeland War Commemorative Practices Among War Veterans – Defenders of the City of Vukovar“, *Ivana Bendru* and *Mateo Žanić*, tried to determine in what way war veterans' population experiences different commemorations of the Battle of Vukovar, and its meaning at the present time. Based on conducted semi-structured interviews and focus group interviews with members of the civil society veterans' organizations in Vukovar area, authors discussed three questions: 1) in what way war veterans remember events of the Battle of Vukovar, namely what do they remember in particular and in what way do they value it; 2) in what way are war veterans included in various commemorations related to the Battle of Vukovar events and how much are those commemorations important to them; 3) in what way war veterans interpret the meaning of the Battle of Vukovar at present time, namely do they consider it properly valued in the Republic of Croatia. Finally, in her paper „Health Care in Croatia – From War to Modernity“, *Mirjana Semenić-Rutko* shortly discusses historical facts and nation-state building of the Republic of Croatia, paying attention more to the health care system development. The medical staff headquarters of the Republic of Croatia was established on the 16th of December 1990 as first official defense unit on the state level after democratic elections. Established under the supervision of the Ministry of Health, this organizational unit has managed the system, finances, medicine supply, hospital organization, and mobile teams/mobile surgical teams. On the field such activities have maintained a high level of health care. Organization of health care under difficult conditions was developed to perfection until the end of the Homeland

War. The health care system, however, needed upgrading and modernization after the war since all Croatian citizens were guaranteed by the Constitution this right.

Three papers in the third section of the Book of Proceedings under the heading *Vukovar '91 – Identities* are authored by Marta Račić, Danijela Lucić, Ozren Žunec, Slaven Zdilar, and Renato Matić. In her paper „Gvozdansko (16th Century) – Vukovar (20th Century): Identity and Fate of Croatian War Veterans – from the Legend to Reality“ *Marta Račić* provides a comparative historical analysis about war veterans' role in defense of Vukovar and Gvozdansko, thus presenting anthropological identity construction of Croatian war veterans 400 years later (Gvozdansko 16th Century – Vukovar 20th Century). She tried to address the cultural and anthropological justification of the legend that is interwoven into the collective memory of the nation, as well as to emphasize the emotion of gratitude for the lives given by soldiers that is consciously cherished and promoted in the society as positive sacrifice for the higher goals – defense of home and family. *Danijela Lucić, Ozren Žunec* and *Slaven Zdilar* in their paper „Ethics of Military Calling – Memory and Identity in Military Education Process“ discuss internalization of key virtues of officers' calling (such as honor, integrity, (self) respect, altruism, courage) that are closely connected to the question of memory and identity/tradition. Their discussion is based on the study of the Ethics of Military Calling Course thought at the Military Engineering Studies and Studies of Military Leadership and Management. Paper provides genesis of the course – its relevance for the officer staff formation, its content and special examples that have bearing on the identity and memory – as well as course perspective. Authors deliberate about course perspective and address key identity sites and sites of memory that are unavoidable and must enter/remain in the course curriculum. Further on, in his paper „Vukovar '91 from Generation Z Perspective – Three Decades Later“ *Renato Matić* provides teaching quality assessment about Vukovar in primary and secondary schools from Generation Z perspective. He collected data through semi-structured in-depth interviews with University of Zagreb students. The collected answers and students' personal accounts were sufficient to enable assessment of the most efficient learning approach about Vukovar '91 and the Homeland War. The proposed learning approach is also applicable to different events while its content offers ways to raise awareness about horrors of war and values of liberty, peace and democratic dialogue.

The final fourth section of the Book of Proceedings under the heading *Vukovar '91 and European Integration* – contains two papers. In his paper „Vukovar and the European Union“, Marc Gjidara provides geopolitical and historical dimensions of the Vukovar tragedy in relation to policy framework of great European states – France, Great Britain and Germany. At the same time Marc Gjidara takes into consideration contemporary traditional politics towards Yugoslavia, especially towards Croatia and Serbia, thus focusing in his paper on relationships and politics in the framework of the European Community. Neven Šimac in his paper gives a short overview of activities and initiatives organized to support Vukovar's and Croatia's integration – three European integrations: 1) very modest activities and initiatives of political and legal integration by the Council of Europe, 2) military – defense activities of the West-European Union, and 3) activities of the diplomatic forum – the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe.