

## ABSTRACT

The study is an interpretation of local dynamics of the Yugoslav memory politics by analyzing memorial rituals following the transition of power on October 10, 1944. The focus of the analysis is on how memory entrepreneurs promoted specific visions of memories from the past in Subotica after the Second World War, under what circumstances “the adequate forms of memories got to be worked out” (Nagy, 2016: 369–390), as well as how events of the past were “coded, balanced and told” (Alexander, 2014: 76). The first part of the analysis is about how partisans and the Red Army took power over in Subotica, the social and political contexts of that event, focusing on places and actors, which made the basis for the Yugoslav hegemonic presentation of the past in the city and later on served as a foundation for “ritual” and “textual memory” (Assmann, 2004: 87). The second part of the analysis is investigating memorials (landmark objects) and commemorations set up right after the power takeover. The representation of partisans fell during the war and the fight for liberation was taken as a traumatic event, thus the study applies the cultural trauma model (Alexander, Eyerman, Giesen, Smelser and Sztompka, 2004) for the examination of memorial rituals.

The study is based on ethnological-cultural anthropological research, semi-structured interviews and the analysis of printed sources.

Keywords: memorial rituals, memory politics, cultural trauma, Yugoslavia, Subotica

## ABSZTRAKT

Tanulmányomban a jugoszláv emlékezetpolitika lokális működésének értelmezésére vállalkozom az 1944. október 10-i szabadkai hatalomátvételt követő emlékezeti rítusok példáján. Arra voltam kíváncsi, hogy a második világháborút követően az emlékezeti vállalkozók hogyan keltették életre az emlékezeti munkát Szabadkán, hogy milyen körülmények között került sor az emlékezés helyes formáinak kidolgozására, és hogyan kódolták, súlyozták és beszélték el (Alexander 2014: 76) a múlt kiválasztott eseményeit. Dolgozatom első részében áttekintem a partizánok és a Vörös Hadsereg katonáinak szabadkai hatalomátvételét, illetve az esemény társadalmi-politikai kontextusait azokra a helyekre és aktorokra koncentrálva, melyekre a jugoszláv hegemónikus múltreprezentációt alapozták Szabadkán, s melyek a rituális és a textuális emlékezet (Assmann 2004: 87) alapjául szolgáltak a későbbiekben. A második részben pedig közvetlenül a hatalomátvételt követően állított emlékjeleket és megemlékezéseket elemzem. Traumatikus eseményként értelmezve a háború alatt és a felszabadítási harcok során elesett szabadkai partizánok reprezentációját, a kulturálistrauma-modell (Alexander, Eyerman, Giesen, Smelser és Sztompka 2004) segítségével vizsgálom az emlékezeti rítusokat.

Dolgozatom a 2018 és 2023 között, Szabadkán végzett néprajzi-kulturális antropológiai kutatás során végzett megfigyeléseimen, félig strukturált interjúkon és nyomtatott források elemzésén alapszik.

Kulcsszavak: emlékezeti rítusok, emlékezetpolitika, kulturális trauma, Jugoszlávia, Szabadka



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**A MÁSODIK VILÁGHÁBORÚ KULTURÁLIS  
TRAUMÁJA SZABADKÁN (1944–1948)**

*CULTURAL TRAUMA OF WORLD WAR II IN  
SUBOTICA (1944–1948) 1*

*TAKEOVER OF POWER IN SUBOTICA AND THE  
YUGOSLAV MEMORY POLITICS*

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Lead by Jovan Mikić-Spartak, the partisan detachment of Subotica and soldiers of the Red Army launched an armed offensive on October 10, 1944 in the evening hours, and they liberated the city by the next morning, on October 11 (Dubajić, 1974: 715–716). During the following days the partisan detachment made a proclamation to citizens: they were forbidden to leave the city, each and every piece of weapon and equipment, all possessions of the German-Hungarian army had to be handed in, the people of Subotica were called upon to preserve order and work hard, as well as follow the orders (Mačković, 2017: 8). The Military Administration holding all executive and judicial power, got formed on the 17th of October. The Military Administration had its regional commands, one of them, the Regional Command in Subotica (Military Command) coordinated the work of the City Command, as well (Mačković, 2017: 9), while the other authority was the Regional National Liberation Committee. Its headquarters were set in the “Yellow House”, which during the Second World War, under the rival regime in power, had the same function, namely, it was the place where the arrested, detained, and convicted, as well as people under trial were kept. Along with this, just like in other liberated territories of Yugoslavia, authorities started “dealing with” people who were declared to be invaders and collaborators of the previous regime, enemies of the people, investigating their misdeeds and war crimes. During these procedures there were a lot of injustice and cruel convictions, a great number of dead penalties and executions without any trial (Đureinović, 2020: 5). The City Command of Subotica founded on October 17, 1944, executed people convicted in the “Yellow House” at a property between the Mačković-brickyard and the Senta street cemetery, where victims were buried in mass graves. Military Administration was canceled on January 27, 1945 (Mačković, 2017: 11), and after that the Soviet type of state socialist system, and later on its

socialist variant, the Yugoslav self-governing socialism (socialist self-government) was set in the focus, as well as the building of the system-specific iconography of Josip Broz Tito (A. Sajti, 2018: 215–221).

Following the power transition, the “self-legitimizing practice of the governing structure“ began (Papp, 2017: 51), when mass-production of monuments for the People’s Liberation War started and were put in practice in the society as a whole (vö. Oroz–Škrbić Alempijević 2015: 133). Apart from the monuments, the names of roads, streets and squares that did not fit ideologically into the regime’s logic got changed – as Árpád Papp put it, while Sándor Petőfi, the poet after whom the Petőfi-brigade was named, or György Dózsa, Attila József and Miklós Radnóti fit into the Yugoslav memory politics, on the other hand, the Serbian royal family and representatives of the regime between the two World Wars did not, and they disappeared from public spaces of the city (Papp, 2017: 47). The new regime took over the public sphere and invented holidays praising socialist revolution and triumphs of the partisans (Rihtman-Auguštin, 1990: 22). The first two days of the New Year, women’s day (March 8), the Labour Day (May 1-2), the Youth Day (May 25), the Fighters’ Day (July 4) and Republic Day (November 29) were red-letter days, and organization of feasts and celebrations on these days served the rooting of the Yugoslav ideology, the new norms and values (Sklevicky, 1988). Ribbon cutting ceremonies were planned on red-letter days in Subotica, too. On the Fighters’ Day or the Day of the Uprising in Serbia (July 4 and 7), the celebration of the city’s liberation (October 10), or the annual commemoration on executed partisan/communist heroes (November 18).

The work on memories was at first related to people who had direct war experiences, witnesses, survivors, or those who died during the war or they were born right after it (Karge, 2014: 29). In the case of Subotica, these people can be divided into two groups: the first is made up of those who remembered the “terrible period“ during the war in Subotica, during the rule of the fascist military-political elite, while collective memories of the second group preserve “an indelible trace“ (cf. Alexander, 2004: 1) of the misdeeds of the partisans and the soldiers of the Red Army. After liberation and the end of World War II, partisans and the Yugoslav government focused on issues how to treat their defeated enemies, how to persecute people who supposedly committed war crimes and their collaborators (Đureinović, 2020: 5). As the elite in power after the war got into their position thanks to the victory of partisans and Red Army soldiers, Yugoslav hegemonic representation of the past concentrated on people who worked for their goal, who died for it or on survivors and their heroic actions, while memories of the partisan purges remained hidden in family memories. The atrocities against the defeated enemy (enemy of the people, the Other) and facts related to partisan actions aiming at its total destruction remained invisible in public discourses of Tito’s Yugoslavia (Kudra Beroš, 2020: 131). On the other hand, survivors, veterans of the partisan military forces and the People’s Liberation War became part of a visible social formation, the Fighters’ Union of the People’s Liberation War (Fighters’ Union), which later on numbered even one million members, while the organization had Tito himself for its president (Đureinović, 2020: 37). The mere presence of Tito in the

organization suggested that it was not the members of the Union who decided whom or what the object to commemoration should be, and who deserves public recognition, but it was the League of Communist of Yugoslavia who had the lead role. As the organization was meant to serve a social and political goal, to create, agitate and preserve the official war memories of the regime (Bergholz, 2006: 77), its leaders were people from the elite of the League of Communists, Tito's closest counselors (Karge, 2014: 33). While memory entrepreneurs of Tito's Yugoslavia were active in institutions run by the regime, they had the opportunity to implement area-specific, local actions thanks to the Fighters' Union decentralized, regional (municipal and local community) way of functioning (Karge, 2014: 29–30; Bergholz 2006: 77). This way, before establishing the Fighters' Union on September 30, 1947, they raised monuments, but there were differences and local variants of implementation in active times of the Fighters' Union, as well.

According to Stijn Vervaeet “building on traumas of World War II, the socialist Yugoslavia tried to establish the collective memory of the Yugoslav society” (Vervaeet, 2014: 230). This process manifested in Subotica as well, as opening ceremonies of different monuments and commemorations on red-letter days and local partisans/communists who died during the war or in liberation fights got the lead role in public discourses. They appeared as victims in the public discourse, and in my opinion, this made it possible to interpret their death as a traumatic event, therefore it is justified to apply the cultural trauma model (Alexander, Eyerman, Giesen, Smelser and Sztompka, 2004) while analyzing memorial exhibitions. This is what the next part is about.

### **The Process of Creating the Trauma**

The first memorial exhibition in Subotica took place in the year, when World War II ended, this was the celebration of Liberation Day (October 10, 1945), in which Soviet and Yugoslav military leadership and local citizens took part.<sup>1</sup> They commemorated 170 soldiers of the Red Army<sup>2</sup> who had fallen during the liberation of the city, next to their resting place in the Orthodox (Pravoslav) cemetery in a parcel called Mulberry Woods (Epreserdő). The author of the monument is Franjo De Negri, and in public discourse, the monument was referred to as a piece of work “Commemorating the Fallen Red Army Soldiers“. It was built out of the parts of the bombed barrack (Duranci–Gabić Počuča, 2001: 78). On the obelisk, there are boards with inscriptions in Russian, the coat of arms of the Soviet Union, with the sickle and the hammer on its top. The memorial is harmonizing with the narrative of Tito's Yugoslavia, where the fight and victory of the partisans got place within the discourse and the alliance of the Yugoslav and Soviet people was emphasized, as at that time the leading part of the Soviet Union in the international communist movement was put into focus, while the central role in the fight against fascism belonged

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<sup>1</sup> Magyar Szó, October 5, 1945, p. 2

<sup>2</sup> Magyar Szó, October 12, 1945, p. 2

to the Red Army (Đureinović, 2020: 39). Speeches at the opening ceremonies summed up thankfulness to our “brothers, the Soviet allies”, and these were immediately answered by the delegation present. Here are citations from both speeches:

We have been confident in the Red Army’s strength from the very beginning, even in the moments when German fascism approached the gates of Moscow. The same way as our friends believed in us, when we were standing here, totally unarmed, because they knew that Marshal Tito was our lead. In our joint fight we sealed our alliance with the blood of our best men, and this monument raised here is the symbol of our endless gratitude and respect for the fallen heroes.<sup>3</sup>

Starting from Moscow, Stalingrad and other front lines of our beautiful homeland our invincible army fought through to get to Yugoslavia, in order to help the liberation of the Yugoslav people to get free from fascism. I can say to my fallen companions, you may rest in peace, you did not die in vain. The thing you created will be kept safe with loyalty and respect. Rest in peace in the land of the free Yugoslavia, the land our Slavic brothers.<sup>4</sup>

After the ceremony there was a huge meeting at the Liberation Square with eight thousand people,<sup>5</sup> where the first Yugoslav monument at a public space in Subotica was set up – although only temporarily –, the piece of work of Gábor Almási. It was 11 meters high and it figured a group of people, six of them, who raised a pentangle to the sky (Gajdos, 1995: 284). This occasion made it clear that – just like earlier regimes – the new administration used public spaces around the Town Hall for organizing events with huge masses of people, as these spaces were suitable for mass-demonstrations and the expression of unity (Papp, 2017: 65). At the mass meeting a commandant of the Red Army was awarded for his merits in the liberation of the city, while the Soviet and the Yugoslav anthem were played.<sup>6</sup> Apart from highlighting the Soviets taking part in the war, there was a great emphasis on Tito, as well, Yugoslav speakers emphasizing his significance in the war for the people’s liberation, and his figure was part of the celebration decorations “under flowers and green leaves, the photo of Marshal Tito was placed, as well as flags, showing that the whole city was celebrating.”<sup>7</sup>

The memorial ritual depicted above shows how the winners of the war, the partisans and veterans fighting side-by-side with the Soviets were doing the memory work, which – apart from raising new monuments – included further activities: establishing museums, writing and publishing war chronicles, naming cities and streets (Bergholz, 2006: 79). At the meeting organized to celebrate the anniversary of liberation, three new street names were initiated, discovering the three founding pillars of memory politics of that age. The Pašić street name was changed into Aljbinov street, honoring the Red Army and its commander, this way emphasizing the Soviet-Yugoslav alliance, the Grammar school street was renamed to Fellegi street.<sup>8</sup> Tivadar Fellegi was the “second victim“ of the liberation of the city, who

<sup>3</sup> Magyar Szó, October 12, 1945, p. 2

<sup>4</sup> Magyar Szó, October 12, 1945, p. 2

<sup>5</sup> Magyar Szó, October 12, 1945, p. 2. The monumental celebration of the anniversary had already started the previous night. Cf.: Magyar Szó, October 5, 1945, p. 2

<sup>6</sup> Magyar Szó, October 5, 1945, p. 2; Magyar Szó, October 12, 1945, p. 2

<sup>7</sup> Magyar Szó, October 12, 1945, p. 2

<sup>8</sup> Magyar Szó, October 12, 1945, p. 2

joined the partisans as a student from Novi Sad in 1943, getting the nickname Radenko and arrived to Subotica as a battalion commander on October 10, 1944 (Dubajić, 1974: 717). The initiative on this renaming of a street was aiming at public honoring of partisans who fought in the war for the people's liberation and their sacrifice, in a local space. The aim of the third initiative for renaming was to edit "local history" (Keszeg, 2015), as the suggested new name for the Road of Daničić was Road Mikić<sup>9</sup>, commemorating the first victim of the fight for the city's liberation (Dubajić, 1974: 716), Mikić himself was a citizen of Subotica. At the meeting there were speeches about the "fallen heroes of Subotica", with a special reference to the above mentioned "Spartacus of Subotica, Jovan Mikić, the Yugoslav athletic champion of European fame, who died in the fight for liberation in Subotica, his hometown."<sup>10</sup> This leads us to the statement that the period after 1945 was characterized by struggles for editing local history, and raising of monuments and memorials focused on the representation of fallen partisans fighting for the liberation of the city. This frame of interpretation enhanced the process of emphasizing the significance of the partisan movement at the level of Yugoslavia as a whole, and also local victims, their nationality and ethnic origin, this was highlighting the movement's multiethnic character and the goal of Yugoslavia to make all people of the republic, including Subotica citizens, live in the spirit of "brotherhood and unity." The Red Army and the Soviet Union had been gradually left out of the Yugoslavian hegemonic representation of the past, culminating in 1948, when they totally disappeared from it, while the memory of the Second World War was kept alive as a proof that the Yugoslav regime had to be established, while it had an important integrative function, emphasizing that the Yugoslav people have fought together against occupators and quislings (Đureinović, 2020: 37).

As one could see at the opening ceremony of the first monument in Subotica, and it was the same at later ceremonies that the memorial rituals were public events, playing an important role in the establishment of social thinking. As these were mass events, local people took part in them, but the order of the ritual was determined by republican bodies of the Fighter's Union. The order of the rituals fit into an overall system, and they were organized in the same way all around Yugoslavia. Part of these ceremonies were processions, locals lining up with flowers and wreaths in their hands, the first places taken by fighters, local functionaries and children, members of the pioneer association. During the memorial ritual, family members of fallen heroes took the most visible positions, especially highlighting the mourning mother and children of the deceased, the ceremony included speeches of local politicians and fighters, singing and reciting of the pioneers, then the laying of wreaths at the monument or mausoleum followed (Bergholz, 2006: 81). All this resulted in a ritual situation or state of mind in Subotica, which united the society in mourning and the feeling of piety, what Zempléni called "the community of piety" (Zempléni, 2009: 24).

In my interpretation, after the Second World War, local memory entrepreneurs "decided" that all the pain partisans/communists executed in 1941 went through would be represented as social pain, a fundamental threat to the society as a whole, their identity,

<sup>9</sup> Magyar Szó, October 12, 1945, p. 2

<sup>10</sup> Magyar Szó, October 12, 1945, p. 2

who they are, where they came from and where they are going to (cf. Alexander, 2004: 9). This decision was followed by a row of activities, a memory work, to be presented on the following pages. This memory work included activities, cultural and institutional processes, which were directed at transmitting the traumatic event.

In accordance with the decisions made at the highest level in Yugoslavia by the time, there was an attempt to diminish the visibility of the Red Army and the Soviet Union in the liberation of Yugoslavia and Subotica, so the celebrations on liberation day, in 1946 were much humbler than in the previous years, without the presence of Yugoslav and Soviet high-ranking officials, without the laying of wreaths – as one may read in the program published.

On the other hand, November 18 got a lot more attention in 1946, the fifth anniversary of the execution of fifteen partisans from Subotica in 1941. By this time, a mausoleum was established, built on the foundation of the monument raised during the fascist occupation, in front of the Church of Saint Teresa of Avila, at the Cyril and Methodius square, where at a memorial ceremony the remains of the executed partisans were reburied. They were hanged in 1941 and buried in the Jewish cemetery (Duranci–Gabrić Počuča, 2001: 85, 2001: 89). They were: Ottmar Mayer, Ödön Kochstein, dr. Adolf Singer, Konstantin Lachenbach, Lola Wohl, dr. Kálmán Mayer and his brother Miklós, Gellért Perl, Miklós Schwalb, Antun Šuturović, Miklós Gerson, Rókus Simokovich, István Lukács, Šime Tikvicki and Lazar Bašić.<sup>11</sup> Their pain remained the symbol of the partisans'/communists' pain and it was presented as a traumatic event, so it was a moral imperativus for every citizen of Subotica to remember and commemorate it. This was suggested by the articles reporting on the commemoration, and the speeches from the memorial event, as well.<sup>12</sup> Related to this event, a competition was announced in November for “projecting a plan for a monumental piece of work honoring the memory of the fallen heroes” at the square in front of the Church of Saint Teresa of Avila, considering the existing foundation of the monument, which “Hungarians started to build during the war” (Gajdos, 1995: 284). Expenses related to the building of the monument should be covered from contributions of the citizens of Subotica and the surrounding settlements. A commission was formed to implement the project, and they started collecting used bronze and copper, as well as raising money, giving postmarks to locals in return.<sup>13</sup>

### The Making of Symbolic References

The founding document of the Fighters' Union defined the condition of enrolling new members, and according to these, the first to be accepted were those who “fought with weapon in their hands in partisan troops, in fights for the liberation or in the Yugoslav army”. According to Karga, one may conclude that immediately after the foundation of the organization, victims were classified in a system of hierarchy, making difference between

<sup>11</sup> Magyar Szó, November 18, 1980, p. 13

<sup>12</sup> Magyar Szó, November 18, 1946, p. 1; Magyar Szó, November 19, 1946, p. 3

<sup>13</sup> Hrvatska riječ, August 3, 1951, p. 1

“fallen fighters“ and “victims of the fascist terror“ (Karge, 2014: 33–36). The first category, the fallen heroes were at the top of the Yugoslav memorial hierarchy, and mentioning their names was in the same row with the highest ranking members of the Fighters’ Union, i.e. the Second World War veterans, who were raised to the highest level of honor via symbolic, ritual, narrative and socio-political practices (Karge, 2014: 36). Among the tasks assigned to the Fighters’ Union, together with praising heroes, there was another one, to emphasize the significance of military events that lead to the establishment of Tito’s Yugoslavia, as well as the importance of the joint struggle of the Yugoslav people of different nationalities and ethnic origin (Bergholz, 2006: 78). Victims of the fascist terror were all people who were killed by the occupator and the quislings in the period between April 6, 1941 and May 10, 1945 in Yugoslavia or elsewhere, including children and the old who died from hunger or during the bombings, victims of concentration camps and prisoners of war (Karge, 2014: 36). This classification, apart from sociopolitical aspects, judging on relatives of the deceased and applications for funding submitted by the survivors, served for the government to take over power above the identity of the deceased, the meaning of their pain, to integrate the fallen victims, who “gave their lives for the new state, ideology and political lead” (Karge, 2014: 36–37). But in order to sum up fallen heroes and the victims of the fascist terror, one needed data collection.

In July 1945, the “commission for data and evidence collection about the misdeeds of occupators and quislings in Vojvodina“, who called upon the locals to give data on those “convicted for political reasons, those who were interned or deported“, and to report what they knew to the Local Commissions for Investigating War Crimes, functioning in larger settlements.<sup>14</sup> The commission established four categories, which alluded to the hierarchy of the Fighters’ Union established two years later. Categories appeared in the newspapers in 1945 as follows:

- 1<sup>st</sup> group: Political prisoners, convicted or non-convicted, who as such were deported to prisons or concentration camps; this group includes comrades (men and women), who worked in an ally country as political activists and died a heroic death.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> group: Captured partisans and fighters of the People’s Liberation Army, who were deported as such to concentration camps.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> group: former prisoners of war of the Yugoslav army, who were brought from camps for war prisoners to concentration camps.
- 4<sup>th</sup> group: Jews, who were deported as such to concentration camps.<sup>15</sup>

Thus, the data collection that started in 1945 contributed to the process of establishing different groups of victims and collecting symbolic references. A similar intention may be detected as the trials of occupators and their collaborators got into the public discourse after the war, as well as the newspaper articles on the memories recalled by witnesses who took part in the hearings. One of the public trials was that of Milos Kovacevics, the

<sup>14</sup> Szabad Vajdaság, July 24, 1945, p. 2

<sup>15</sup> Szabad Vajdaság, July 24, 1945, p. 2



“notorious fascist chief detective in Subotica“, who conducted the hearings in the “Yellow House“ during the occupation and he decided upon people’s lives.<sup>16</sup> It was especially emphasized that he was responsible for the execution of Ottmár Mayer and his case was also related to the arrest of dr. Adolf Singer, a doctor from Subotica who got famous by that time. The case was investigated and discussed in detail:

He organized the hunt after dr. Adolf Singer in 1941. Dr. Singer was a progressive, broadminded citizen, and he was hiding in Budapest by that time, but Kovácsévics — by torturing Singer’s family members — detected his hiding place and handed over the doctor to fascist assassins. The doctor detained from Budapest got in front of the military court and was sentenced to death. Kovácsévics beat him up with bare hands so heavily, that when it came to his execution, the broken man could not stand or walk alone, so he was practically brought to the place of execution.<sup>17</sup>

Both of the victims, dr. Singer and Mayer, were among the fifteen partisans/communists, who got executed on November 28, 1941. Their remains were reburied in the year of the trial, November 1946, in the mausoleum at the Cyril and Methodius square. Although further cases were published in newspapers, with the growing number of victims,<sup>18</sup> the anniversary of the execution of the fifteen victims became the real time of the performance (cf. Alexander, 2009: 57). In my opinion, the fact that memory entrepreneurs picked the fifteen partisan/communist victims of Subotica and the anniversary of their execution, may be related to the fact that all around Yugoslavia the role of the partisans in the Second World War was emphasized and referred to as crucial for the making of the new state, as well as the multiethnic character of their movement. This way in Subotica as well, the joint fight against the occupators of local groups of different nationalities and ethnicities were part of the public discourse almost all the time. In the years following the war, newspapers were writing in detail about the village named Csutka near Subotica, Stalingrad - as the locals called it, because every local at the settlement joined the National Front and took their part in the rebuilding of the country, as well as for all the merits of the locals during the Second World War:

During the occupation the village was surrounded by Hungarian gendarms and soldiers with bayonets many times. But Csutka village had hard hearted, brave men, who did not run away from their own shadows. One of them, Boltó Milánkovics spent 9 months in the notorious »Yellow House« and other similar places. Then he was brought to the frontlines due to military service obligation. He deserted and joined the Red Army. Then he returned with the 1<sup>st</sup> Proletarian Brigade to fight for freedom. There were other men who acted similarly, like Kálmán Pertics and Péter Horvácki, the latter had fallen as freedom fighter somewhere around Batina. His mother and father were taken hostages, and they never returned. All these cases contributed to the determination of men living in this little village consisting of merely 51 houses that they have to fight for freedom till the

<sup>16</sup> Magyar Szó, March 24, 1946, p. 4

<sup>17</sup> Magyar Szó, March 24, 1946, p. 4

<sup>18</sup> Magyar Szó, March 24, 1946, p.; Magyar Szó, March 28, 1946; Magyar Szó, March 29, 1946, p. 4; Magyar Szó, March 30, 1946, p. 5

end. Twelve of them applied for military service in the 8<sup>th</sup> Brigade. Croatians, Serbs and Hungarians left together and fought together. Now they also enjoy together the rights and freedom they fought for. Hungarians and Croatians got equal pieces of land in the tiny village. They commemorate together fallen heroes. So, this is where this beautiful name, Stalingrad came from.<sup>19</sup>

### Conclusion

The study represents local dynamics of the Yugoslav memory politics with the help of memorial rituals following the takeover of power in Subotica on October 10. The main focus of the analysis is on how memory entrepreneurs promoted specific visions of memories from the past in Subotica after the Second World War, under what circumstances “the right forms of memories got to be worked out” (Nagy, 2016: 369–390), as well as how events of the past were “coded, balanced and told” (Alexander, 2014: 76). After the burial of soldiers of the Red Army and the installation of the monument honoring them, by the year of 1946, the representation of partisan troops and Tito, their victory, the fallen communist/partisan heroes started to get formed and become founding element of the Yugoslav official historical memory. Yugoslav memory politics commemorated 15 citizens of Subotica executed in 1941, highlighting the multiethnic character of the group of victims. With construction of the mausoleum, the “dramatic scene” was marked (Alexander, 2009: 54), which insured space for memorial rituals in Subotica for the following years: starting from 1947, the anniversary of the Liberation Day of Subotica (October 10) was marked at the mausoleum with laying of wreaths.<sup>20</sup>

The meaning of the collective situation kept changing, as the number of partisan/communist victims was growing continually. As we saw, we did not have to wait for long, and the data collection announced in 1945 brought results, along with the hearings, the public was informed about further partisan/communist victims of the previous regime, who were interrogated, released or sentenced to death.

Based on my findings, I also suggested that the Fighters’ Union was not a sole, unassisted memory entrepreneur. Although they defined the ideological-political direction that should be followed, different interest groups, institutions, the mass media and the system of education had key roles in transferring and transmitting memories of the war and commemoration on the victims (Karge, 2014: 32). Thus, by the time the Fighters’ Union was founded in 1947, the memory works had started earlier, and according to Karge, this determined the first fifteen years of the organization, namely, being concerned with the war generation (Karge, 2014: 29), and for settlements that meant being concerned with “their own” victims. Names of the deceased were written on the monuments, as well as the message to be projected to the public, namely, that the socialist Yugoslavia could come into being thanks to the death and sacrifice of communist/partisan fighters (Bergholz, 2006: 81).

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<sup>19</sup> Magyar Szó, April 13, 1947, p. 3

<sup>20</sup> Magyar Szó, October 14, 1952, p. 2.

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