

The Story of Croatian Bosnia: Mythos, Empire-Building Aspirations, or a Failed Attempt at National Integration?

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The nineteenth-century processes of “nation-building” and national integration took place in the western regions of southeastern Europe against a distinctive backdrop. The formation of national self-images, the creation of a national self-definition, and indeed the emergence of any clear consensus on who constituted or should constitute a given national community proved daunting tasks for the multi-ethnic and multi-religious populations of southeastern Europe in the provinces of the Habsburg Monarchy and the Ottoman Empire.

The essential contention of this inquiry is that religious and national identities are not clearly interrelated in southeastern Europe (much, indeed, as they are not clearly interrelated elsewhere). I offer, as a clear illustration of the untenability of religious identity as an adequate foundation for nation building, an examination of the case of Bosnia and the development of a sense of identity and national belonging among Bosnian Croats and Muslims. Even the case of the emergence of the modern Serbian and Croatian nations, often cited as archetypes of national identities which developed along religious fault lines, is not as clear as it often seems to be in the public mind. It was not the only possibility, but rather was merely one alternative, an alternative that was shaped as much by internal circumstances as by the prevailing foreign political situation: the emergence, meaning, and “content” of the nation can be interpreted as a response to these factors.

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The emergence of the modern Croatian nation was the result of an extremely complex process of national integration, which in some cases only took final form in the twentieth century. The intellectuals and politicians who developed the national program(s) played an essential role in the move towards integration, but their influence on the actual development of the processes themselves was nonetheless limited, even if they tended to assume (wrongly) that their words bore great weight. At the same time, the differences that had developed in earlier periods (for example, religious and denominational affiliations) should not always be seen as barriers to national integration within the community of speakers of the same language. One often comes across the claim that, in the Balkans, religious

belonging essentially predestined the processes of national belonging and nation building. This contention, however, proves only partly true, even simply from the perspective of the final outcome of these processes (for instance, in the case of the Serbs and Croats). In other cases, external circumstances, the shifts in events and conditions, and the impact of external factors thwarted processes of integration that were underway. The failures of national integration among the Bulgarians and Macedonians offer good examples. One hardly needs the divine gift of prophecy to see that, had Greater Bulgaria, which was created by the 1878 Treaty of San Stefano (or more precisely, by the successes of the Russian armed forces), not been torn to pieces by the opposing European powers at the Congress of Berlin, the integration of the linguistically and religiously very close Macedonian Slavs into the Bulgarian nation would not have been an insurmountable task for the Bulgarian intellectual and political elites. And it would be simply foolhardy (and methodologically unsound) to project the current situation back to the mid-nineteenth century, claim that the situation at the present is the “outcome” of processes of national integration, and then assess the nation-building programs and strivings on the basis of this apparent “success.”

In the last decades of the twentieth century, influenced in no small part by the bloody events that came with the disintegration of the second Yugoslav state, in Western (and also Hungarian) public opinion, thanks in large part to the writings of several figures in the media with only the most superficial grasp of the situation, the image of the Balkans as a region torn since its earliest history by ethnic conflicts began to spread (again). Thus, for example, one reads time and time again of the ancient tensions between Serbs and Croats, though the chronicles contain mention of not a single armed conflict between these two “peoples” before the twentieth century, and before the mid-nineteenth century, even their national narratives and theories of national belonging did not collide with each other much. Of course, the opinions and national stereotypes that emerged and gained sway in public opinion often had as little to do with any observable reality in the nineteenth century as they do today. The only real similarity one finds is that the “educated West” always had the right to offer ethical judgements and condemnations concerning the individuals and/or countries on the historical stage of the region.¹ The best example of this is the

1 Maria Todorova’s book on the image of the Balkans that took form in the West and the images that the peoples of the Balkans have of themselves garnered considerable praise and became widely familiar (and was also translated into several languages). See Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans*. I was pleased to find, when

image that emerged of the national liberation movements in the Balkans and the Ottoman state, which sought to squash them. Victor Hugo, Byron, and their contemporaries felt an overwhelming sympathy for the Greek freedom fighters, and they rallied French and English public opinion to their cause, writing dramatic works about the massacres and cruel acts committed by the “barbaric Turks” (for instance the massacre at Chios, also famously immortalized in a painting by Eugène Delacroix), but no one bothered to note that the “poor, defenseless, oppressed” Balkan rebels (both Serbs and Greeks) had completely cleansed the liberated territories of their Muslim civilian (Turkish or even Islamic Slavic) populations.

The Question of Denominational Belonging and Nation in Bosnia: Ante Starčević’s Innovative Approach to the Followers of Islam

The abovementioned claim according to which national integration in the Balkans was shaped by religious belonging—a claim found repeatedly in the secondary literature on the region—is most certainly not true of the peninsula as a whole. The Albanian nation, after all, successfully united followers of the Islamic Faith, the Catholic Church, and the Orthodox Christian Church. Sectarian-religious differences proved an obstacle to national integration in Bosnia and Herzegovina and in relations between Croats and Serbs. For the Albanians, a shared language and common cultural traditions proved an adequate foundation for integration.² This was not the case in Bosnia and Herzegovina, where attempts that began in the nineteenth century to promote integration from various sides or to hinder similar efforts on other sides were mutually conflicting and ultimately contributed to the situation in the last decade of the twentieth century, when divisions came to the fore and the inhabitants of Bosnia and Herzegovina, who essentially speak the same language, became three separate and opposing nations whose identities are based on religious affiliation.³ In the discussion below, I consider the fate of one of these attempts, the Croatian attempt at integration in Bosnia. From time to time, I mention the endeavors of other sides in this conflictual situation simply to clarify various aspects of the essential questions I am raising, but I do not delve into the problems of integration between Catholic

this essay was originally published in the periodical *Limes* in 2003, that I had reached conclusions similar to Todorova’s conclusions about images of the Balkans abroad.

2 See Csaplár-Degovics, *Az albán nemzetiválás kezdetei (1878–1913)*.

3 See Džaja, *Konfessionalität und Nationalität Bosniens und der Herzegovina*.

and Orthodox factions, nor do I consider the Croatian and Serbian secondary literature on the subject.

The uprisings of Christian peoples of the Balkans against Ottoman rule in the nineteenth century inevitably took the form of religious conflict, and the serious mutual atrocities committed by armed groups against civilian populations (such as acts which took place in Bosnia during the 1875 uprising) gave rise to lasting tensions among the peoples of different faiths which hardly vanished in the twentieth century, the many political and cultural shifts and upheavals notwithstanding. This historical legacy has been one of the factors that has hindered the integration of Muslims into the Serbian nation, although attempts were made by Serbian politicians and intellectuals to win over members of the Slavic population who follow the Islamic faith.

In the literature of southeastern Europe, from the folk heroic songs to the works of the Renaissance and Baroque and even works by nineteenth-century Romantic authors, anti-Ottoman sentiment is a strong element, or in other words, there are many, many works which could be characterized as anti-Turk (*antiturcica*). The same was true of Croatian popular thought, as shown both in the heroic songs that were passed on by word of mouth among the broader population and in the fiction that appeared in print. The Muslim Ottoman Turks were cast as the enemy and the Christians as the heroes of freedom. One can easily see how, against this backdrop, Ante Starčević, who later founded the Croatian Party of Rights, gave utterance to an almost revolutionary notion in the history of the peoples of southeastern Europe in 1858 when he used words of praise in an article about Islam and the Prophet Muhammad. This constituted a startling break with the existing literary tradition and the practices in the print media of attacking not only the Ottoman Turks but also their religion. It is clear from Starčević's later writings and speeches that his principal aim was to integrate the Bosnian Muslim population into the Croatian nation.

Other Croatian and Serbian politicians had also sought to do this, of course, but Starčević was the first to attempt to do this not by hoping to convert Muslims to Christianity but by showing respect for their religious beliefs and culture. It is worth keeping in mind, of course, that the war between the Habsburg Monarchy and the Ottoman Empire had come to an end in 1791, and most of Croatia had not been under Ottoman rule since the Peace of Sremski Karlovci in 1699. Thus, the conflicts of previous centuries were a distant memory.

The Medieval and Early Modern Roots of Croatian National Integration

In order to understand Starčević's initiative towards national integration, one must first know a bit about the roots and developmental stages of Croatian national integration. The processes that took place between the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries proved important for the later movement towards Croatian national integration, the formation of a unified Croatian nation, and a nation-state encompassing the whole of what was regarded as Croatian ethnic territory. At the beginning of the fifteenth century, Venice finally managed to assert control over the Dalmatian cities. Much of the Kingdom of Bosnia, which had become independent at the end of the fourteenth century and was becoming increasingly Catholic as a consequence of the efforts of the Franciscans, had become part of the Ottoman Empire by 1463. After the Battle of Mohács in 1526, some two-thirds of Croatia and Slavonia also became part of the Turkish Empire. The Croatia which remained, which was referred to as the remnants of the remnants by the Croatian orders of the time, continued to form a kind of commonwealth with Hungary under the protective wing of the Habsburgs, but in comparison with the period before Mohács and the fall of the medieval Kingdom of Hungary, ties between the two parts of this country were looser. The first evidence in writing of Croatian independence dates to 1527. In a letter to Ferdinand Habsburg, the Croatian *Sabor* emphasized that Croatia had once been an independent kingdom and had voluntarily joined the Hungarian crown. At the same time, however, relations between the remaining Croatian coastal territories and the fragments of Slavonia had become closer, and the Croatian-Dalmatian *Sabor*, which had previously met separately, was united with the Slavonic Provincial Assembly.

In the sixteenth century, the Croatian ethnonym (and later the name Croatia itself) spread to medieval Slavonia through the members of the nobility who were attached to their identities as Croats but who had fled Croatia, and the name Slavonia came to refer to the eastern parts of the territory between the Drava River and the Sava River. The notion that the provinces (Croatia, Slavonia, and Dalmatia, or by their historical Croatian name, Trojednica or Trojedno Kraljevstvo, in Latin, Regnum trium unum, or Kingdom Three-in-One, and also, from time to time, alongside these three, also Bosnia) belonged together began to take form in the writings of members of the Croatian nobility and the Croatian orders in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, as did the long-term goal of liberating these provinces from Ottoman rule. The liberation and

unification of the Croatian territories (Croatia, Slavonia, Dalmatia, and even Bosnia) became a primary political goal among the Croatian orders. The struggles against the Turks, however, ultimately united the Croats and the Hungarians into a kind of community with a shared fate and quest, and Croatian aspirations for independence were only theoretical in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. This bond of a shared fate is perhaps best exemplified by the writings of the Zrínyi brothers, Miklós (Nikola VII Zrinski) and Petar (Petar IV Zrinski or Péter Zrínyi in Hungarian).⁴ By the middle of the seventeenth century, however, the image of Croatia, Slavonia, and Dalmatia as a unified community of states that stood on an equal footing with Hungary was clearly emerging in the mind of Juraj (Georgius) Ráttkay, one of the most prominent Croatian historians of the period and a member of the Zrínyi circle, and the united Croatian-Slavonian orders were also beginning to demand equal status with Hungary.⁵

One must keep in mind, of course, that there were other Croatian priests and monks who were active in the diocese of Zagreb, apart from Ráttkay, and who contributed to the development of Croatian nationalism, and some of the bishops of Zagreb also played a role in the birth of early Croatian nationalism. The Zagreb diocesan synod of 1634, which convened for the establishment of a national denomination, was a particularly important milestone.⁶

The ideas and efforts of Pavao Ritter Vitezović were also of immense importance to the development of Croatian nationalism, in particular the way in which this nationalism evolved in the nineteenth century. In his work *Croatia rediviva* (Croatia Reborn), which was published in 1700, Vitezović offered a bold vision of a great empire under Croatian leadership that would unite the neighboring Slavic states of the Balkans and even include Hungary.⁷ Vitezović was far ahead of his time with his ideas, and his ambitious national plans had no concrete political repercussions among his contemporaries in the eighteenth century, much as the visions of Slavic unity and an imagined Illyrian-Slavic motherland found early on (in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries) in the

4 Miklós Zrínyi (1620–1664) was a military leader and statesman, and he also authored the first epic poem in Hungarian, *Szigeti veszedelem*, or *The Siege of Sziget*, a poetic narrative of the battle against the Ottoman forces in 1566 in which his great-grandfather Nikola IV Zrinski perished. His brother Petar (1621–1671) was also an important military leader, statesman (banus of Croatia) and also wrote poetry, though unlike his older brother Miklós, Petar wrote in Croatian.

5 On Ráttkay and the ideas of the Croatian-Slavonian orders in the seventeenth century, see Bene, *Egy kanonok bárom királysága*.

6 See Molnár, *Magyar hódoltság, bornát hódoltság*.

7 Vitezović, *Croatia rediviva* and Blažević, *Vitezovićeva Hrvatska*.

writings of some Croatian (mainly Dalmatian) authors (such as Vinko Pribojević, Mavro Orbini, Ivan Gundulić, and Juraj Križanić) never became part of Croatian political thinking among the larger public, since it was really only found, before the emergence of the Illyrian movement, among members of the Croatian and Slavonian nobility.⁸

In the history of early Croatian national thought, a Catholic notion that took form in the Illyrian colleges in Italy in the seventeenth century occupies a special place. Indeed, the very question of who should or should not be considered an Illyrian was already a subject of debate in the seventeenth century, and the right to use the House of Saint Jerome in Rome (the seat of the *Natio Illyrica* in the Eternal City) was decided in a lawsuit in 1656.⁹ This decision further narrowed the group of those who belonged to the so-called Illyrian nation. According to the Holy See decision of 1656, the Illyrians were to be understood as the Catholic Slavs of Croatia, Slavonia, Dalmatia, and Bosnia-Herzegovina (this decision excluded people who had come from some of the Austrian hereditary provinces that constituted what today is Slovenia). This idea spread partly through the writings of Croatian Jesuits and Dominicans, but in particular as a consequence of the work of the Bosnian Franciscans, both in Bosnia-Herzegovina and in the territories under Hungarian control, and also in the territories of the Franciscan Order of Saint John Capistrano in Hungary and Slavonia in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. This is particularly evident in the work and writings of the prominent figures of the Croatian Franciscan cultural circle in Buda, such as Emerik Pavić, Grgur Čevapović and Matija Petar Katančić. For example, the very name Dalmatian and Illyrian, which were used in the Renaissance and Baroque periods, spread among Croatian ethnic groups in Hungary in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries precisely through the works of this ecclesiastical intelligentsia, and the appearance of an early unified Catholic Illyrian-Dalmatian national consciousness was observable both among the Croatian nobility and among the bourgeoisie. Through Croatian national ideologies, movements, and political parties in the nineteenth century, however, these views became part of Croatian national consciousness. Vitezović's visions in particular exerted an influence on both the ideas of the Illyrian movement led

8 On early, pre-modern notions of Illyria, see Fine, *When Ethnicity did not Matter in the Balkans*. See also Blažević, *Ilirizam prije ilirizma*,

9 Bene, *Egy kanonok bárom királysága*, 130. Sándor Bene's excellent book offers a clear overview of Rátkay's political vision: an equal alliance among Croatia, Slavonia, and Dalmatia (the "Kingdom Three-in-One" and Hungary). Notably, Rátkay did not include Bosnia in his Croatian state project.

by Ljudevit Gaj in the 1830s and 1840s, which proclaimed Southern Slavic unity, and the aforementioned Starčević's Croatian Party of Rights, which formed in the 1860s and aspired to create an independent Croatian state (and which, in part because of the influence of Vitezović's ideas, could be considered a sort of "Greater Croatia" party).

The Origins of the Croatian Idea of Bosnia

The notion that Bosnia was Croatian, however, was by no means a nineteenth-century creation. It can be found in Croatian literature and historical works from the Renaissance and even Baroque periods. In his sort of proto-nationalist political and ideological writings from the turn of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Vitezović offers a clear sketch of this idea. Bosnia was first mentioned as a Croatian land in a fourteenth-century Croatian version of a twelfth-century chronicle from the seaport town of Bar on the Montenegrin coast. Bosnia itself was sometimes under Serbian, sometimes Croatian rule in the tenth century (of course, it was a much smaller area than present-day Bosnia, referred to as the little land of Bosnia¹⁰ by Emperor Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus), but this meant little more than temporary and nominal rule, which was replaced by Byzantine rule in the eleventh and twelfth centuries.

The Bosnian banovina embarked down the path towards independence at the end of the twelfth century, although the Croat Šubić family temporarily took control of it in the late thirteenth century. By the fourteenth century, however, Bosnia had gained independence not only from the Šubić family but also from its powerful neighbors, Dušan Nemanjić's Serbia and Hungary, which by then was under the rule of the House of Anjou. It became an independent kingdom, and the Kotromanić dynasty expanded its state at the expense of the medieval Croatian territories. Bosnia also remained separate from the neighboring powers for a long time from the perspective of religion through the independent Bosnian church, mistakenly called Bogomil (and in the Middle Ages *patarenes*, *patarini*). Bosnia was originally part of the Catholic Church, as it lay to the west of the Theodosian line on the Drina River (in the era before Ottoman expansion into the region, there were very few Orthodox in the eastern periphery of Bosnia), and the Western Church never abandoned its ambition to bring the inhabitants of the area back into the Catholic fold.

10 *χρῆστον Βοσωνα*/horion Bosona. (DAI)

By the middle of the fifteenth century, the Western Church had proven largely successful in these efforts, following the peaceful conversion of the majority of the Bosnian population by the Franciscan monks who had established themselves in Bosnia in the mid-fourteenth century, though Stjepan Tomaš, the second-to-last Bosnian king, had expelled the remaining people (deemed heretics) who had refused to convert. In the surviving Slavic-language sources of the Bosnian state at the time, the Croatian ethnic name was only rarely used, and one could well conjecture that Bosnia might have embarked down the path towards the development of a separate national identity in the modern era had it not been for the Turks. In 1463, however, the Bosnian kingdom was dissolved by Sultan Mohammed the Conqueror. The landlord social stratum in Bosnia, which had evolved in a distinctive way in the Ottoman Empire and had managed, by the end of the sixteenth century, to ensure that its estates would be hereditary, was not compromised of actual descendants of the old landowning class (or if so, only in small numbers) and thus was hardly a guardian of Bosnian state traditions. Rather, the members of this stratum were fully integrated into the Bosphorus empire.

The memory of the medieval Bosnian state was only preserved, as a consequence of a combination of fortunate circumstances, by the Bosnian Franciscans, who were given permission to pursue their efforts by the Ottomans, with later elements of Croatian identity emerging through contact with Croatian territories not yet occupied by the Turks or already liberated. Bosnia was referred to as the Croatian land of Bosnia in the works of Bosnian Franciscan poets in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In a poem titled “The Croatian Virgins to Croatia,” which was published in 1626, Tomko Mrnavić Bošnjaniin referred to the inhabitants of Bosnia as Croats. August Vlastelinović, also a Bosnian Franciscan, wrote in 1637, “the dominion of Prince Stipan has crumbled, the mighty realm of the Bosnian king, the courage of the Croatian people is broken.” In a book published in Venice in 1704, Ivan Filipović, a native of Sinj, addressed the patron saints of his country: “Defenders of our countries, Bosnia, Herzegovina, and Croatia, and the entire Croatian-speaking people, pray for us.” In his book *The Flower of the Conversation of the Illyrian or Croatian-speaking People*, which was printed in 1747, Franciscan monk Filip Grabovac, born in Vrlikan, refers to Bosnia in a poem titled “Glory to Dalmatia” as a Croatian province.¹¹

11 I take the citations from the poem from the second edition (published in Split in 1991) of the 1937 *Crvena Hrvatska* by M. Štedimlija (published in Zagreb).

These ideas found the most exuberant expression in the writings of the aforementioned Vitezović, who was active at the turn of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Vitezović included not only Bosnia but also present-day Slovenia and Serbia in his vision of a Croatia reborn, or *Croatia rediviva*. Vitezović referred to all Southern Slavs as Croats, and in his petition to Count Luigi Ferdinando Marsigli on the borders of Croatia, he referred to Trans-Croatia (Serbia), Central Croatia (Croatia proper and Bosnia), and Seaside and Midst-River Croatia (Dalmatia, Slavonia).¹² Vitezović's work was immensely important, because the leaders of each of the two nineteenth-century Croatian national ideologies, Illyrianist Yugoslavism and Starčević's theory of Greater Croatian integration, regarded Vitezović as a forerunner and drew on his ideas. In another one of his works, *Bosnia captiva* (which was dedicated to the Croatian Viceroy Peter Keglević), Vitezović called on Keglević, a Croatian nobleman who was also of Bosnian descent, to try to reclaim his homeland for the Holy Crown, to which it had once belonged. He offered the following plaintive sigh in this work: "If only Croatia would at least cherish the hope that Turkey, soon to be defeated again, will hand over the keys to the city of Jajce!"¹³

Bosnia in the Nineteenth-century Visions of Croatian National Integration

In his pamphlet *Disertatia iliti Razgovor*, Count Janko Drašković, who essentially set the political agenda of the nineteenth-century Illyrian movement, argued that, on the basis of Croatian state law (according to which Croatia, Dalmatia, Slavonia, and Bosnia were all Croatian kingdoms), Croatia should be united with Bosnia under Habsburg rule. Drašković was thinking of the whole of Bosnia, and not just the parts of western Bosnia to which the Croatian nobility referred as Turkish Croatia, which had been part of Croatia as late as 1592 (Drašković later formulated an even more ambitious vision of southern Slavic unity). Vitezović's views, however, also shaped Ljudevit Gaj's Illyrianism, which proclaimed broader national integration (Croatian, Slovenian, and Serbian) and a more far-reaching notion of Yugoslav unity. The circle of bishops surrounding Bishop Strossmayer, who was also an exponent of the idea of South-Slav unity, took a similar line in the second half of the nineteenth century. Furthermore,

12 Vitezović, *Croatia rediviva*. The volume contains Ritter's writing (held in Bologna) to Marsigli on the question of the Croatian borders: *Responsio ad postulata comiti Marsilio. Odgovor na potraživanja grofa Marsilija*, 187–215.

13 Ritter, *Bosna captiva*.

the Croatian literature of the first half of the nineteenth century continued the anti-Turkish and anti-Islamic tradition of the Renaissance-Baroque period and proclaimed the need for the South Slavic peoples to unite against the Turks just as their sixteenth-century and seventeenth-century predecessors Pribojević, Gundulić, and even Križanić had done. I am thinking for instance of Croatian poet Ivan Mažuranić's epic *Smrt Smail-age Čengića* (The Death of Smail-age Čengić), a major work of Croatian Romantic literature which unambiguously depicts the conflict between Montenegrins and a Muslim landlord as a clash between oppressed Christians and oppressive Muslim rulers (although the work could also be interpreted as depicting a generalized conflict between tyrants and the oppressed).¹⁴

In the 1850s, there was a significant change in Croatia's relationship to Islam and more generally to the Southern Slavs in Bosnia of the Islamic faith when the Croatian national ideology developed by Ante Starčević and Eugen Kvaternik, which envisioned and aspired to the creation of a large Croatian state without Serbia on the basis of real and imaginary Croatian state law, appeared. This ideology stood in stark contrast to Illyrianism, which sought Southern Slavic unity.

The emergence of a narrower Starčevići-Kvaternik Croatian national ideology (narrower compared to the ideas of Gaj and Strossmayer) was strongly influenced by the fact that the attempt at national integration of Illyrianism had failed among both Slovenes and Serbs, and that in Serbia, a Serbian national ideology had emerged, and this ideology included its own and political ambitions and programs. The theoretical and practical work of Ilija Garašanin and enlightened Serbian writer, linguist, and ethnographer Vuk Stefanović Karadžić in the 1840s offers a clear example of this. As it so happens, Starčević's broader notion of Croatian identity, which in his view included Orthodox and Muslims living in the territory of Croatian state law, alongside Catholics, was a direct reaction to a work by Karadžić in which Karadžić characterized Southern Slavs who spoke the Štokavian dialect as Serbs, whether they were Catholic, Muslim, or Orthodox.¹⁵ Starčević regarded it as essential to integrate Bosnian Muslims into the Croatian nation, since both the Serbs and the Croats regarded the nationality

14 On the image of Turks (meaning Muslims) in the earlier Croatian literature, see Dukić, *Sultanova djeca*. On economic and social conditions and relations in the Ottoman Empire, see Demeter, *A Balkán és az Oszmán Birodalom*.

15 See *Končević za istoriju, jezik i običaje Srba* by Karadžić.

of Bosnia's inhabitants as the decisive factor that would settle the question of the state to which Bosnia would ultimately belong.

The Serbs, however, had spoken of Bosnia as a Serbian province from the turn of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and Karadžić, as noted, considered the inhabitants of Bosnia to be uniformly Serbs. This idea, however, did not originate with Karadžić. It was a view espoused by most of the well-known Slavic philologists of the period, including the Slovene Jernej Kopitar and the Slovak-Czech Šafaryk, who lived in Vienna. For the preachers of the linguistic national model, factors such as shared historical tradition, the sense of belonging to a common state, or even the role of religion as a repository of culture and thus also an element of cultural difference did not matter or were not given the same importance.¹⁶ It is worth noting, however, that some former members of the Illyrian movement accepted Karadžić's views and even the use of the ethnic name "Serbian" in the interests of Southern Slavic unity. Imbro Ignatijević Tkalac published a book in German on the so-called Eastern Question in which he predicted a bright future for the Serbs, whom he saw as the valiant heroes who had ousted the Ottomans and the nation that would finally create southern Slavic unity, a unity that would include the Croats.¹⁷

From then on, efforts towards Serbian national integration consistently included the aim of integrating non-Orthodox Christian Southern Slavs, though this was never achieved in practice. In his *Načertanije* (or draft plan), a writing that was secret at the time, Garašanin, who drew up the Serbian national program, promised religious equality, which he said would satisfy all Christians and "possibly some Muslims." Garašanin does not touch on what would become of Muslims who were not satisfied with Serbian religious policy, much as he also offers no tactics with which to win the trust and sympathies of Bosnians of the Islamic faith, although he does suggest several ways to win over the Catholics and Franciscans in Bosnia.¹⁸ In the aforementioned work, Karadžić writes in a flattering tone about Bosnian Muslims. He praises their commitment to their faith, although he attributes this to their Orthodox Christian origins and contends that they were simply heirs to the strong tradition of religious conviction of their ancestors.

There were several reasons behind the failure of the integration attempts. Perhaps the most important of these was the simple fact that the Serbian

16 Demeter and Bottlik, *Maps in the Service of the Nation*.

17 Tkalac, *Das serbische Volk*, 345–46.

18 Garašanin, *Načertanije*. The secret plan only came to light at the beginning of the twentieth century.

national tradition and Orthodoxy were closely linked, and the liberal thinkers of the nineteenth century failed to recognize the significance of this link (though Garašanin saw this). The Serbian Orthodox Church was both the guardian of the Serbian tradition of statehood and the institution through which Serbian national consciousness was spread (for example, among the Orthodox Vlach population of Croatian and Bosnian origin). In the Serbian Principality of the nineteenth century, Eastern Orthodox Christianity was the state religion. The historical interweaving of Serbian identity and Orthodoxy was present in the public mind and even permeated the schools. All this contributed to the fact that, for the majority of Serbs, religious and national affiliation were closely intertwined, and thus in practice, the prevailing understanding of Serbian identity did not include Catholics or Muslims, even if they spoke the same or a similar language. In the case of the latter, the profound mistrust between Orthodox and Muslims also hindered national integration and even any form of rapprochement.

The national uprisings of Christians in the Balkans in the nineteenth century had been accompanied by atrocities, murders, and acts of ethnic cleansing committed against Muslim populations everywhere, including in Serbia, and there had been frequent reprisals against Christian civilians by the Ottoman forces. Clearly, this hardly contributed to the integration of Muslims into the Serbian community, so Karadžić's claim that Muslims who spoke the Štokavian dialect were Serbs remained little more than an optimistic vision or wishful thinking. The situation is perhaps captured eloquently by the simple fact that Prince-Bishop of Montenegro Petar II Petrović Njegoš' epic poem *Gorski vijenac*, or "The Mountain Wreath," which is regarded as one of the prominent masterpieces of nineteenth-century Serbian Romantic literature, is in part about the tragic expulsion of Muslim Montenegrins. Karadžić's comparatively enlightened ideas of integrating Muslims met with little interest in the latter half of the nineteenth century among the Serbian elites either. The recollections of Bosnian Franciscan Anto Knežević offer an illuminating example of this. Knežević visited Belgrade before the Bosnian uprising of 1876 and was received by Serbian minister Blaznavac. Blaznavac encouraged the Bosnian Serbs to rise up against Ottoman rule, and he assured Knežević that Serbia would help: "As soon as they launch the uprising, call on the Turks [i.e. the Bosnian Muslims] either to be baptized immediately or to flee wheresoever they can if they don't want to be massacred." Knežević, the Bosnian Franciscan, was appalled by this and offered the following reply: "Sir, that is horrifying, for they are our brothers, even if they are Turks." He added that, in time, the Bosnian Muslims would

see the light and repent for what they had done in the past to their Orthodox brothers. The minister, however, continued: “Do not believe this! The Turks are followers of a faith of curs, and as long as they adhere to their cur faith, you will never have any peace.”¹⁹

The atrocities that were committed against the Muslim population during the anti-Turkish Serb uprisings of the early nineteenth century (and which today we would refer to as ethnic cleansing) thus sowed the seeds of deep mistrust among the majority of Bosnia’s Islamic population and reduced the chances of Karadzic’s arguably enlightened vision of national integration across religious lines of ever becoming a reality.

In strong contrast with this, Ante Starčević and his followers broke with the anti-Turkish and anti-Islamic traditions of Croatian literature. In 1851, Starčević offered the following call for unity with Muslims in the Zagreb periodical *Narodne Novine* (The People’s Newspaper): “In Bosnia lives the purest and least corrupted part of our nation, which can more easily do without us than we can do without it.” He made another gesture in support of unity with people he regarded as Croatian Muslims in the 1858 issue of the *Hrvatski kalendar* (Croatian Calendar) when he presented the Prophet Muhammad as a great historical figure. In 1876, in an article titled “The Eastern Question,” Starčević contended that the Bosnian landlords were not Turks, but rather were “the purest and most ancient Croatian nobility in all Europe.”²⁰ This assertion, which admittedly seems astonishing at first, is made a bit clearer by interesting data collected by Ivo Banac, according to which some Catholic and Muslim clans still regarded themselves as related to each other at the beginning of even the twentieth century.²¹ Eugen Kvaternik was also firmly convinced that Bosnia was Croatian (as were, in his view, the Bosnian Muslims), and in his assessment, it was necessary for the Habsburgs to take Bosnia from the Serbs (and, through them, the Russians) and, of course, annex it to Croatia.²² The deeply religious, fanatical Catholic Kvaternik, however, sought to bring the Muslims back into the fold of the Catholic Church, as his first letter to Austrian foreign minister Count Johann Bernhard von Rechberg-Rothenlöwen in 1860 makes clear:

19 Jelenić, *Kultura i bosanski franjevci*, vol. 2, 207.

20 The two citations are found in Starčević, “Ocjena drugog sveska Bosanskog prijatelja I. F. Jukića,” 6, and Starčević, *Istočno pitanje*, 16.

21 See “Ima jedna Bosna” [There exists one Bosnia]. Enes Karić interjúja Ivo Banac történésszel. *Danas*, Zagreb, January 22, 1991; and Banac, *Protiv straha*, 70–79.

22 On Kvaternik’s ideas concerning Bosnia, see Gross, *Izborna pravaštvo*, 268–69 and Pavličević, *Hrvati i istočno pitanje*, Chapter titled: “Eugen Kvaternik o istočnom pitanju od 1859–1868. godine,” 393–405.

If the king of the whole of Croatia succeeded in reconquering these lands—*iure postliminii*—and were to unite them with other nations, it would be quite natural that the 400,000 Muslims would, under the influence of the Catholic State, become Catholics and not Pravo-Slavs.²³

The Bosnian Franciscan Ivan Frano Jukić was the first to venture the claim that the Bosnian beys and agas were the descendants of the nobility of the medieval Bosnian kingdom. According to Jukić, these descendants of the Bosnian nobles who had converted to Islam formed the Bosnian Muslim ruling class, and thus Starčević's aforementioned idea (that the Bosnian Muslims represented the "purest and most ancient Croatian nobility in all Europe") was in fact inspired by Jukić. As it so happens, recent historical research based on Ottoman sources has shown kinship between very few noble families and the Bosnian Muslim elites, and there is no convincing evidence of any mass Islamization in fifteenth-century Bosnia. For the most part, the medieval Catholic Bosnian nobility either migrated to Croatia (for instance the Keglević, Janković, Jurišić, and Jelašić families) or were unable to maintain their social positions in Bosnia under Ottoman rule.

The notion that Bosnia was fundamentally Croatian was espoused and proclaimed by many pro-right Croatian politicians and historians in the nineteenth century. Starčević, who stood on comparatively liberal grounds, considered it unacceptable that in the "modern era" (i.e., the nineteenth century) religious difference could be an obstacle to national integration.²⁴

Bosnia was considered Croatian not only by these two politicians of the Party of Rights, but also by all nineteenth-century Croatian historians (regardless of party affiliation), including Franjo Rački and Vjekoslav Klaić. Admittedly, their Serbian contemporaries considered Bosnia Serbian, and this was true well into the twentieth century. The well-known Serbian anthropogeographer Jovan Cvijić, in contrast, believed that the inhabitants of Bosnia in the Middle Ages were Bogomils and Orthodox, and that it was only through the proselytizing of the Franciscans, who behaved like militant zealots in their efforts to spread their faith, that religious difference had strengthened and now threatened to separate what Cvijić referred to as the "Serb-Croat" people.²⁵

23 Kvaternik's letter to Count Rechberg (Pismo Eugena Kvaternika grofu J. B. Rechbergu 1), Kvaternik, *Politički spisi*, 127. In 1868, Kvaternik published a two-volume work on the so-called Eastern Question. Kvaternik, *Istočno pitanje i Hrvati*.

24 For a summary of the ideas and aspirations of the Croatian Party of Rights, see Gross, *Povijest pravaške ideologije* and Gross, *Izvorno pravaštvo*.

25 Cvijić, *Balkansko poluostrvo i južnoslovenske zemlje*. In his work, which was published under the dictatorship of King Alexander, Cvijić wrote not of the Serbian nation but of the Serb-Croat nation, in support of the idea of Southern Slavic unity, which was the official government line.

The Muslim-friendly ideas of Starčević and his adherents, however, found expression in Croatian literature (the same cannot be said of Serbian literature). Josip Eugen Tomić, for example, chose prince Husein Gradašćević as the protagonist of his 1879 novel *Zmaj od Bosne*, or “The Dragon of Bosnia” (a kind of title or nickname that had been given to Gradašćević by historical tradition),²⁶ and portrayed him as a praiseworthy hero of the struggle for independence.²⁷ Ante Kovačić, another Croatian writer who belonged to the circle of the Party of Rights, wrote a satire titled *Smrt babe Čengićkinje* (Death of Granny Čengić), in which he attacked *Smrt Smail-age Čengića* (The Death of Smail-aga Čengić), Mažuranić’s romantic epic (mentioned earlier in this article), which had strong anti-Turk or rather anti-Muslim overtones. These compositions sought to nurture sympathy among Croatian readers for their Bosnian brothers and sisters of the Islamic faith.

Bosnia at the Crossroads of Croatian and Serbian National Aspirations

The struggle between Serbs and Croats, fought mainly through propaganda, over whether Zagreb or Belgrade would manage to integrate the populations in the territories between them into their national narratives and political bodies was underway. This struggle was made more complex for both sides by their political positions. The tiny state of Serbia was semi-dependent on the Turks, and its room for maneuver was influenced by Austria and Russia, while the limited autonomy enjoyed by the Croats gave them even less room for maneuver in foreign policy than the Serbs had. Despite this, Garašanin had been sending agents to Bosnia since 1844, where the Serbian Orthodox Church had already been working for decades with increasing success among the Orthodox communities for national integration with Serbia. The Croats had already tried to gain a foothold through the Bosnian Franciscans during the period of Illyrianism (though with appeals to Yugoslav unity), so only the initiatives of the Party of Rights circle had any real success. The situation became increasingly tense in 1876, when the Bosnian

26 Husein Gradašćević (1802–1834) rebelled against Istanbul in 1831 in response to reforms introduced by Ottoman Sultan Mahmud II which sought to weaken the privileges of the nobility. The uprising, the goal of which had been Bosnian autonomy, was defeated, but Gradašćević, who died under mysterious circumstances after having been allowed to return to the Ottoman lands after a brief period of exile, remains a Bosnian national hero to this day.

27 Tomić, Josip Eugen: *Zmaj od Bosne*, Zagreb, 1879. The novel was published a year after the Austro-Hungarian occupation of Bosnia and was an immediate success, as the fate of Bosnia was a major concern for Croatian public opinion at the time.

Serb rebels declared their intention to join Serbia, which went into battle against the Turks for Bosnia but failed. At the same time, after the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy invaded Bosnia, the Croatian *Sabor* sent a resolution²⁸ to Franz Joseph appealing to him to unite the new province with Croatia (an initiative which also failed). These two opposing endeavors of the Serbs and Croats became a source of serious tensions between the two nations.²⁹ A press war broke out between Croatian and Serbian newspapers over the question of which nation had the legitimate claim to Bosnia and its inhabitants.

Starčević was perhaps the figure who was most strongly opposed to the Austro-Hungarian occupation of Bosnia. A large part of Croatian public opinion did not share his views, as it was hoped that Bosnia would then be annexed to Croatia-Slavonia. The pro-independence Starčević, however, had no wish to be the recipient of this “gift” from Austria (and it soon became clear that Vienna and Pest had no intention of making such a gift to the Croats). Starčević called for cooperation among the three Bosnian religious communities, as he feared that both Austria and Russia would try to bring them under their control. His concerns were hardly unfounded. After 1878, however, Croatian national integration efforts in Bosnia were not realized, or only to a limited extent.

Austro-Hungarian governor Béni Kállay espoused a policy of a unified Bosnian nation which prevented the integration of Muslim Bosnians into Croatia or Serbia. Admittedly, however, he could only boast of relative success. In 1891, in a poem published in the Kállay-backed journal *Bošnjak*, the eminent poet and writer Safvet-beg Bašagić still wrote in favor of the Bosnian national concept. A few years later, however, Bašagić identified as a Croat and had come to espouse Starčević’s views. In developing his new concept, Kállay chose the term Bosniak as the designation for this nation, which is a Slavic variant of the Turkish name for the inhabitants of the region, Bosnaklar (Bošnjak). Noel Malcolm, citing Bosnian authors, notes that the name Bosniak was only used by Muslims to refer to themselves.³⁰ This was not the case, however, as Catholics

28 Petition in form of “felirat” / “adresa.”

29 These problems contributed to the fall of Croatian poet and viceroy Ivan Mažuranić, as he could not ensure that Croatian legal measures would not go beyond their jurisdiction with this resolution, as was claimed by Franz Joseph. On the relationship of Croatian politics to the Eastern Question and Bosnia, see Pavličević, *Istočno pitanje i Hrvati*, in particular the chapter titled “Hrvatski sabor u istočnoj krizi (1875–1878),” 406–24.

30 Malcolm, *Bosnia*, 148. Malcolm refers to the work by Bosnian author Mustafa Imamović, “O historiji bošnjačkog pokušaja.” Purivatra, *Muslimani i bošnjaštvo*, 31–70.

had also used this name in the past, for instance a group of Catholic Croats who settled in and around Pécs in the seventeenth century and who, as the sources make clear, always referred to themselves as Bosniaks.³¹ According to Tomislav Kraljačić, Kállay wanted to apply the Hungarian nation-state model to Bosnia (this model is, in its essence, the same as the French national model):

Fundamentally, this [model] is a transformation of the doctrine of the Hungarian political nation. It is being adopted with the aim of creating a reliable political nation in an ethno-religiously heterogeneous society in Bosnia and Herzegovina led by the landowners as the pillars of this society.³²

Kraljačić writes of the ethno-religious heterogeneity of Bosnia, but in my view, in 1882, one finds only the germs of a modern national consciousness, even among Catholics and Orthodox.³³ Kállay, who represented the Austro-Hungarian (and not only Hungarian) Empire, tried to implement both an enlightened policy of modernizing state administration and modern institutions familiar from the British colonial model and to make the tensions arising from religious differences manageable in some way.³⁴ An emphatically separate Croatian and Serbian national consciousness did not become widespread among the Catholic and Orthodox communities before 1914, a fact to which the still prevalent view of Southern Slavic unity and the existence of one and only one South Slavic nation contributed (and of course the modern national idea had not exactly gained strong influence among the largely uneducated Bosnian peasant population). It is possible that Kállay's project to unify the Catholics and Orthodox simply came too late (due to the influence of modern nationalism, which had been gaining ground in Croatia and Serbia in the second half of the nineteenth century), but it is also possible that there was never really a strong chance of welding the different religious denominations of Bosnia into a unified Bosnian nation. In the twentieth century, Croatian and Serb aspirations essentially canceled each other out, although the Croats at times seemed to have had a better chance of successfully integrating the Muslims of Bosnia.

31 See the material under *Regnicolaris Conscriptio* for the year 1715 in Baranya County in the MNL OL Online Database. <https://adatbazisokonline.hu/> Last accessed on June 1, 2022.

32 Kraljačić, *Kalajev režim u Bosni i Hercegovini*, 524.

33 In 1878 and 1882, the various religious groups fought together against the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. Demeter, and Csaplár-Degovics, *A Study in the Theory and Practice of Destabilization*.

34 See Malešević, "Forging the Nation-centric World: Imperial Rule."

Thus, for a period of two decades beginning in 1883, acting through joint Minister of Finance and Governor of Bosnia Béni Kállay, the monarchy pursued a policy which was partly aimed at preventing Bosnia and its inhabitants from becoming attached to the Serbian or Croatian national narratives or integrated into the Serbian or Croatian political bodies, as both Vienna and Budapest were convinced that the monarchy's position in the region would be equally threatened, whether Zagreb or Belgrade were able effectively to state their claims to Bosnia. Partly for this reason, Kállay developed the concept of a unified Bosnian nation and forbade and strove to hinder Croatian and Serb integration efforts. According to Imre Ress, "Kállay sought a means of eliminating the rivalry between Serb and Croat nationalism and of overcoming Muslim religious conservatism by creating an integral Bosnian national consciousness."³⁵ His plan failed not only because he was too late (as noted above, this was hardly the only explanation), but also because he was unable to seal the Bosnian population off entirely from outside (Croat and Serb) influences.

Moreover, Silvije Strahimir Kranjčević, the most prominent Croatian poet of the time, became the editor of the literary section of the Sarajevo-based scientific and literary journal *Nada*, which Kállay had launched (and which was printed in Cyrillic and Latin letters). Kranjčević used the journal to publish works by the best representatives of Croatian modernist literature. The Serbs, however, boycotted the magazine.³⁶ Ultimately, all Kállay really achieved with this journal was to hinder the integration of Bosnian Muslims into Croatia and Serbia and to awaken in them a sense of separateness that could not be explained solely by religious differences (the creation of a unified Albanian nation at least raises questions about the theory of insurmountable divisions between so-called civilizations on the basis, largely, of religious difference, a theory perhaps most frequently associated today with the work of American social theorist Samuel Huntington).³⁷

Admittedly, there had been a struggle and even an armed uprising led by Bosnian nobles and agas in the 1930s against Istanbul for autonomy, but the main reason for this had been opposition to the Tanzimat reforms, which had threatened the privileges of the Bosnian Muslim landowners. In other words, this struggle had not had a truly national character. The integration of the Bosnian Muslim Southern Slavs into a national community was slow to take shape, but

35 Ress, "Kállay Béni bosnyák nemzetteremtési kísérlete," 246.

36 Ibid., 250; Ćorić, *Nada*, 136–42.

37 On the gradually emerging process of national integration among the Bosnian Muslims under Habsburg rule, see Donia, *Islam pod dvočlavinim orlom*.

the process began during the period in which the region was under the control of the Habsburg Monarchy, and there were already signs of a transformation from a religious community to a national community. It was first and foremost Mehmet-beg Kapetanović Ljubušak and his circle that supported the principle of a separate (Muslim) Bosnian nation, but by the turn of the century, most of the Muslim secular intelligentsia had become more sympathetic to the Croatian national narrative, with only a minority of them gravitating towards the Serbs.³⁸ Later, the Muslim ecclesial community became more of the foundation for separate Bosnian national aspirations.³⁹ Although in principle Kállay had sought to prevent the Bosnian Orthodox from identifying with the Serbian nation as well, by obtaining from the Patriarch of Constantinople the right to appoint the leaders of the Orthodox community and by replacing the Greeks with Serbs, the Monarchy had in fact created an opportunity as early as the 1880s for the development of initiatives towards the integration of the Bosnian Orthodox population into the Serbian national narrative and nation, which was sanctioned (admittedly after a long struggle) by state recognition of the autonomy of the Orthodox community in 1905. In 1907, the Serbian National Organization was founded. The strivings of the Islamic religious community for autonomy also gained state recognition in the early twentieth century. The Muslim community was politically divided in the early twentieth century. The Muslim National Organization, founded in 1906, was more in favor of autonomy, while the Muslim Progressive Party, founded in 1908, was Croatian-oriented.

The shift in the church organization also constituted a turning point in the process of Croatian national integration. In 1882, the pope consented to the creation of the Archdiocese of Sarajevo (with the bishoprics of Banja Luka and Mostar), with Josip Stadler as Archbishop of Sarajevo. Stadler, who held this post from 1882 until his death in 1918, was a supporter of the so-called Trialist movement, which sought the unification of the Croatian-inhabited provinces. While the Franciscans of Bosnia had always favored southern Slavic unity, from the outset, the Franciscans of Herzegovina and Bishop Paskal Buconjić of Mostar were focused on promoting Croatian national integration.⁴⁰ The Croats were slow to form a political community, and it was only in 1906 that they

38 See Ress, “Kállay Béni bosnyák nemzetteremtési kísérlete,” 243–53 and “A bosnyák nemzetudat fejlődése,” 254–73. See also Donia, *Islam pod dvočlavinim orlom*.

39 On the Bosnian national idea, see Filandra et al., *Bošnjačka ideja*.

40 On the situation in Bosnia and Croatian political initiatives, see Grijak, “Položaj Hrvata u Bosni i Hercegovini u drugoj polovici 19. i na početku 20. stoljeća.”

initiated the establishment of the Croatian National Community, which was only a cultural association at the time, as they were not permitted to pursue Croatian national policy or use national symbols. The Serbs, in contrast, had been able to use their national colors and symbols freely, partly from 1886 and fully from 1905. In 1910, shortly after the Annexation Crisis of 1908 (the Austro-Hungarian annexation of Bosnia), Bosnia-Herzegovina was given a constitution, and in provincial parliament that was elected at the time, the Croatian community, led by Nikola Mandić, generally cooperated with the Muslims against the Serbs, who were in the relative majority and were casting their gaze towards Serbia. After Kállay's failure, the Austro-Hungarian authorities in Bosnia allowed the use of Croatian and Serbian ethnic names, and after the annexation, the constitution drafted by István Burián recognized three nations. But neither the Croats nor the Serbs gave up on their visions to integrate the Muslims of the region into their nations (they had already largely, though not entirely, abandoned their aspirations to assimilate each other), and both sides enjoyed some successes in this struggle (for instance, the cultural society Gajret, which was established in 1903, strove to promote Serbian identity among the Slavic Muslims, while the most powerful Muslim political organization allied itself with the Croatian party against the Serbs at the outbreak of World War I). The Serbs also tried to make gestures to win over the Muslims, and a work was published that listed prominent Ottoman officials of Bosnian descent among Serbian national heroes.⁴¹

Of course, there were exceptions and instances of cooperation between Serbs and Muslims in the name of South Slavic unity, for instance, Young Bosnia, a separatist movement that was active in Bosnia before the outbreak of World War I, or the aforementioned Gajret, which later was unambiguously oriented towards the Serbs, but which at first, when Safvet-beg Bašagić has played a more prominent role, had been more closely linked to the Croats.⁴²

Indeed, at the time of the Balkan wars, Bosnian Muslims volunteers enlisted in the Serbian army even when some of the units of this army had massacred Muslims in communities in Kosovo.⁴³ There was just as much distrust of Muslims among Serbs, of course, as there was of Serbs among Muslims because of the atrocities which had been committed by the Ottoman authorities and

41 Vukićević, *Znameniti Srbi muslimani*.

42 Malcolm, *Bosnia*, 152.

43 Malcolm, *Kosovo*, 254. According to the report sent to the Vatican by Lazer Mjeda, archbishop of Skopje, Serbs massacred some 25,000 Albanians (most of whom were Muslims) in 1912–13. The European press at the time reported on the atrocities, and Serbian Social Democrat Dimitrije Tucović condemned them.

armed Muslims (for instance, when the First Serbian Uprising had been brutally squashed or at the time of the April Uprising of 1876).

Cooperation between Bosnian Serbs and Muslims was hindered by the fact that some leading Serbian politicians had a very low opinion of Bosnian Muslims. In his memoirs, the prominent sculptor Ivan Meštrović described a typical (and widely cited) conversation that he had in 1917 with Stojan Protić, a leading Serbian politician and the first prime minister of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes. Protić allegedly said that,

when our army crosses the Drina River, we will give the Turks [this was the term he used to refer to Bosnian Muslims] 24 or perhaps 48 hours to return to the faith of their ancestors, and those who are unwilling to do so will be massacred, as we did in Serbia back in the day.⁴⁴

Protić's vision was not transformed into a reality at the time. Brutal atrocities of this kind were committed in 1918, but the official Belgrade leadership did not attempt to put his plan into practice.⁴⁵

Hungarian Policy in Relation to Croatian National Integration Aspirations, with Regard to Croatian Ideas on Dalmatia and Bosnia

People active in political circles in Hungary first became aware of the Croatian national integration efforts after the emergence of the Illyrian movement, and it was then that the Hungarian press and then Hungarian politicians began to react to the Croatian nation-building ideology. Ljudevit Gaj, the leading figure of the Illyrian movement, took an active part in the Slavic-Hungarian language policy struggles by publishing two brochures written by Slovaks in Croatian lands. One

44 Meštrović, *Uspomene na političke ljude i događaje*. The chapter in question: "Diskusije sa Stojanom Protićem," 63–67. The incriminating statement ("Kad prijeđe naša vojska Drinu, dat ćemo Turcima dvadeset i četiri sata, pa makar i cetdeset i osam, vremena da se vrate na pradjedovsku vjeru, a što ne bi htjelo, to posjeći, kao što smo u svoje vrijeme uradili u Srbiji"); found on page 66) was spoken in May 1917 in Nice, where the members of the Yugoslav Committee were negotiating with Protić, who was representing the Serbian government. Trumbić was also present as the head of the Committee, as were a few other members, but according to Meštrović, they were never able to make their voices heard. When the latter was finally able to pose a question to the Serbian political, Protić affirmed the statement he had already made.

45 Malcolm, *Kosovo*, 273. He mentions 6,040 Albanians who were murdered in 1918 out of revenge, and atrocities were also committed in Bosnia. Malcolm, *Bosnia*, 162. On the Serbian side, these brutalities were usually justified with reference to the anti-Serb activities of the so-called *Schutzkorps*, the anti-Serb forces set up by the Austro-Hungarian authorities, but contrary to popular belief, in addition to Muslims and Catholics, there were also many Serbs who served as members of these notorious units. Banac, *Nacionalno pitanje u Jugoslaviji*, 301.

was a pamphlet written in German by Samuel Hojč titled “Sollen wir Magyarren werden,” or “Should we become Magyars?” This writing, which encouraged opposition to the Magyarizing efforts of the Hungarian administration, became a source of tensions between Hungarians and Croats because Hojč had it published in Karlovac under the pseudonym Domoljub Horvatović, and it was seen by the Hungarians as a Croatian attack on the Hungarian cause and was even discussed as such in the National Assembly in Pozsony (Pressburg, today Bratislava, Slovakia). The second work was a writing by Lutheran pastor Georgius Rohonyi, another Slovak author who exerted influence on the relationship between Croats and Hungarians at the time. Rohonyi’s *Palma quam Dugonics similesque Magyari Slaviae erupere attentarunt, vindicata*, which was written in Latin but was also distributed in manuscript form in Croatian translation, was intended as a response to remarks made by Hungarian author András Dugonics (many, many years earlier) denigrating the Slavs. However, even the Hungarian political knew little of the new political, civil rights, and territorial demands of the Croatian movement at the time.

Ferenc Császár, who had once taught at a grammar school in Fiume (today Rijeka, Croatia), had been the first person to try to inform the Hungarian public about the situation in Croatia and the Illyrian movement in 1839. He had portrayed the figures of this movement as Pan-Slavic agitators who were threatening to upset the old Hungarian-Croatian alliance, and this image of the Illyrians was passed on in the Hungarian press of the 1840s.⁴⁶

Thus, the image (ominous for Hungarians and the Habsburgs) of a Pan-Slavic empire as envisioned by the Croats had already appeared in the writings of Császár, but at the time, the Hungarian political elite was troubled not by Croatian plans that staked a claim to Bosnia (Hungarian public opinion was not even aware of Drašković’s pamphlet, in which Drašković cast his gaze on Bosnia), but rather insisted on Slavonia as an integral part of Hungary, drawing on historical sources.⁴⁷ Hungarian politicians also did not accept the basic

46 Császár, “Utazási töredékek. Horváthon.”

47 The question of so-called Lower Slavonia had been raised before. In 1790, Skerlec wrote a discussion paper on the subject titled “Fundamenta quibus ostenditur tres inferiores Slavoniae comitatus semper ad iurisdictionem regni et bani Slavoniae pertinuisse.” In Miskolczy, *A horvát kérdés története és irományai*, vol. 1, 427–29. This writing was republished by the Croats in 1832, when the question was again on the agenda. On the Hungarian side, among the polemical writings on the question of whether Slavonia belonged to the Slavs, it is worth mentioning György Gyurikovics’s work published in *Tudományos Gyűjtemény* (Scientific Collection) in 1836 and titled “Verőce, Szerém, Pozsega vármegyék és a Gradiscai, Brodi, Pétervárad Grenzschafts Regementek vidékei a Magyar Országnek elválaszthatatlan Teile”, as well as Georgius Fejér’s

Croatian aspiration for national integration (which envisaged the unification of Croatia, Slavonia, and Dalmatia), and they even questioned Croatia's status as a legal political entity. This was captured in statements made at the National Assembly in Pozsony, such as, "Where is this Croatia? Ah, it was destroyed long ago, in the time of King Matthias!"

In the 1840s, Lajos Kossuth, one of the most prominent Hungarian politicians of his time, also rejected the Croatian public law theory as unfounded, thus also rejecting the legal foundations of the old Croatian autonomy, which had been based on customary law, and he did so at a time when the Croatian national movement was seeking to expand its claims (and emphasize what it saw as the legal justifications and foundations of these claims) and was demanding the full unification of Croatia, Slavonia, and Dalmatia. This explains why the proposal made, at Kossuth's suggestion, by Pest County in 1842 to detach Croatia (more specifically, the counties of Zagreb, Kőrös, and Varazdin) from the Hungarian administration was hardly well received by the Croatian national movement. Later, in late 1847, in a speech at the National Assembly in Pozsony, Kossuth questioned the very existence of Croatia as a legal separate, sovereign entity. "There is no Croatia," he said, and he was only willing to accept use of the word Croatia "if no constitutional force is attached to the term."⁴⁸

Not everyone in Hungary shared Kossuth's views concerning the question of Croatia and public law. The Hungarian conservatives cooperated with the Illyrianists after 1845, because, as was true in the case of many other questions, they did not want to make any changes to the Hungarian-Croatian public law relationship (not even on the question of Slavonia), as the articles by Count Antal Széchen make abundantly clear.⁴⁹

Even in the Hungarian opposition, there were those who showed some understanding of or even support for Croatian national aspirations and even Croatian territorial ambitions. In his *Szózat a magyar és szláv nemzetiség ügyében* (Appeal on the issue of Hungarian and Slavic nationhood), Miklós Wesselényi,

"Croatiae et Slavoniae cum Regno Hungariae nexus et relationes." Almost up to the present day, Croatian historiography has considered the area Croatian territory, even in the Middle Ages, which is why it is perhaps worth mentioning that in the most recent historical atlas published in Zagreb, the issue is discussed in light of the results of research on the Hungarian Middle Ages, and two full pages of maps are included on the "migration" of Slavonia, clearly showing where the province was in the fifteenth century and where it ended up in the eighteenth. Regan, *Hrvatski povijesni atlas*, 330–32 and 342–44.

48 Barta, *Kossuth Lajos 1848/49-ben*, vol. 1, 440. For Kossuth, Croatia existed only as a geographical term.

49 Széchen, "A horvát bonyodalmak, I–IV"; Széchen, "Még egy szó a horvát ügyekről."

in contrast with Kossuth, characterized most of the Croatian national claims as legitimate, including the existence of a separate Croatian nation:

Croatia and Slavonia existed and still exist as a country. It had and still has its own nationhood, though tied to the Hungarian nation. They can justly demand the use of Latin, used instead of the mother tongue, or even the living mother tongues in their bosoms and in their internal administration; they can demand not only that they be permitted to live with their mother tongues among their families and in solitude, but that they be permitted to foster and cultivate them.⁵⁰

Wesselényi also recognized Croatian territorial claims, and he supported the unification of “Dalmatia, Croatia, and Slavonia,” and in his plan to transform the Habsburg Empire into a “federation of states” (a plan outlined in the same writing), he would have linked the Slavic part of Istria to Croatia and the Italian part of the peninsula to the Italian federal unit. Wesselényi made no mention of Bosnia, however, which at that time was still part of the Ottoman Empire. It is worth noting that by the end of August 1848, Kossuth was also willing to recognize Slavonia as part of Croatia.

After 1860, the Hungarian political elite or at least Ferenc Deák, who had done much to further Croatian-Hungarian reconciliation, recognized the basic legal and territorial aspirations of the Croatian national movement. The Croatian-Hungarian Compromise of 1868 explicitly stated that the Hungarian side recognized the right of the Croats not only to Dalmatia but to Slavonia as well, in theory. In the meantime, however, the Austrian parliament had declared the province part of Cisleithania, and the Hungarian government had no desire over the course of the next few decades to assert Croatian virtual rights, which figured in the Compromise and had the sanction of Emperor Franz Joseph, against the predilections of the Austrians. Franz Joseph had already approved of the Austrian decision, but he had also had no qualms about signing the Croatian-Hungarian Compromise. In connection with this, Éva Somogyi quotes the critics of the whole system on which these compromises rested (in other words, the Croatian–Hungarian Settlement or *Nagodba* of 1868 and the Austro-Hungarian Compromise or *Ausgleich* of 1867), who contend that this system was based on a lie. Somogyi challenges this argument, however, noting that “the ‘resolution’ of the public law situation in Dalmatia shows that the complex compromise system on which the *Ausgleich* and the *Nagodba* rested had been built required

50 Wesselényi, *Szózat a magyar és a szláv nemzetiség ügyében*, 271.

uncertainty and imprecision on questions of public law, and it was advisable to avoid unambiguous decisions in the interests of making this system work.”⁵¹

The question of Bosnia and where it belonged only became relevant in 1878, after the occupation, and of course there was no question of the Hungarians ever supporting the decision of the Croatian *Sabor* to annex Bosnia to Croatia (the newly annexed province was under joint Austro-Hungarian rule). This dual system of governance was not without problems, and the demands made by the Croatian *Sabor* (and the Croatian press) left no doubt in the minds of the government actors in Vienna and Budapest concerning the strength of Croatian nationalist demands. Indeed, the Croatian aspirations for a tripartite transformation of the Habsburg Monarchy became clearly palpable, even if they were not formulated so explicitly. Kálmán Tisza and the Hungarian government saw the issue very clearly, however, and the Hungarian Council of Ministers subsequently dealt with the matter. The prime minister even drafted a memorandum for the emperor in which he included a proposal for the partition of Bosnia-Herzegovina between Cisleithania and Transleithania. The press campaign launched in the early 1880s by Frigyes Pesty against any Croatian-Hungarian compromise may well have been linked to Kálmán Tisza’s political ideas about Bosnia.⁵² Tisza’s plan was hardly unknown to the monarchy’s scholars.⁵³ The text of the plan explicitly considered this division of Bosnia necessary in order to prevent Croatian nationalist visions from threatening the empire (though I would note, these aspirations really only threatened the dualist system). Indeed, the memorandum is explicit about this:

As a final arrangement, however, the only solution that could be seriously taken into consideration would attach part of the lands in question to the lands of the Hungarian crown and the other part to the kingdoms and lands represented on the Austrian Imperial Council. This is the only way to ensure that the dualist structure of the Monarchy will not be threatened by the enlargement of the Empire to include Bosnia and Herzegovina. The inclusion of these two lands as direct imperial members of the Monarchy and their incorporation into the Monarchy in this form would be utterly contrary to dualism. This would create a third group of states in the Monarchy, which would draw Croatia,

51 Somogyi, *Hrvatska u zajedničkom sustavu*, 267. According to Somogyi, these two apparently contradictory stances actually contributed to the survival of the empire on the basis of compromises.

52 Imre Röss called attention to the possible link between Frigyes Pesty’s press campaign and Kálmán Tisza’s political plan in an essay included in a volume of papers from a 2019 conference on Hungarian-Serbian relations held in Belgrade. Röss, “Thallóczy Lajos és Kállay Béni.”

53 Rutkowski, *Der Plan für eine Annexion Bosniens*. See also Szabó, *Ungarns Politik gegenüber Bosnien*.

Dalmatia, and one or two lands from the territories represented on the Imperial Council or at least parts of them to itself... and the triad would be created in the Monarchy with a third, Slavic member.⁵⁴

Tisza also advocated the annexation of Slavonia to Hungary, which clearly would have been necessary to establish a direct Hungarian link with the northern part of Bosnia. However, Franz Joseph did not support the Hungarian prime minister's ideas, though he was also similarly unsupportive of the demands of the Croatian *Sabor*.

In the last decades of the Dualist era, questions concerning the place of Dalmatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina in the Empire (i.e., the question of which part of the Empire they should belong to) was addressed several times in discussions on Hungarian-Croatian and Austrian-Hungarian-Croatian relations. Interestingly, the Hungarian political elite and much of the press also treated Croatian claims to Dalmatia as part of the Greater Croatian imperial aspirations, even though Hungary had acknowledged the legitimacy of this claim in the Croatian-Hungarian Compromise of 1868. When the Hungarian opposition (which still sought Hungarian independence from the Habsburgs) was making friends with people on Croatian oppositional circles, Ferenc Kossuth and his associates promised the Croats that they would support the reattachment of Dalmatia to Croatia (and the Hungarian crown), which led to the Fiume Resolution, in which Croatian opposition parties made the Hungarians a peace offer. As perhaps was to be expected (given the logic of oppositional party politics), the liberal periodical *Az Újság* (The Newspaper) criticized the supporters of the Fiume Resolution and the Hungarian political forces allied with them. It is worth quoting passages from some of these articles, especially on titled "The Croatian adventure."⁵⁵ According to *Az Újság*, the Fiume Resolution was little more than a manifesto of sorts of the vision of a Greater Croatia:

So let the coast from Trieste to Budva be Croatian. This was the program with which they set out to forge Hungarian-Croatian peace. The extreme newspapers of the coalition greeted this with a howl of triumph. It must be admitted, however, that the 1867 wing [the pro-dualist wing] of the Hungarian coalition was averse to this alliance. But the bait—Dalmatia—is having an effect here too.

54 Confidential Memorandum by Royal Hungarian Prime Minister Tisza on the treatment of Bosnia and Herzegovina in the foreseeable regulation of public law relations. January 1883. AT-OeStA/HHStAPAI 459 Secret documents: Liasse IX. documents regarding Bosnia-Herzegovina, 1877–1883. Box 459/2.

55 *Az Újság*, October 8, 1905.

After coming to power in 1906, the Hungarian opposition coalition forgot the promises it had made to the Croats concerning Dalmatia (Franz Joseph only allowed them to play a governmental role if they were willing to abandon demands for any major changes in public law). However, in Hungarian political life, the question of the part of the empire to which Dalmatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina should belong and, thus, the issue of Croatian ambitions (or the need to hinder or counter Croatian ambitions) continued to be raised later, even after the outbreak of World War I.

During the war, numerous solutions to the so-called Southern Slavic question within the Monarchy were proposed. The most strident opposition to any trialist solution or any solution that in any way threatened the Dualist system came from Prime Minister István Tisza, the National Party of Work, and the leading Hungarian political circles, and they maintained their firm opposition to these ideas right up to the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. The annexation of Dalmatia to the lands of the Hungarian crown was repeatedly demanded by the Hungarian public law (independence) opposition throughout the Dualist era. In 1889, Rezső Havass provided a new ideological foundation for this (with appeals not only to public law but also to economic arguments), and he continued to emphasize this view in the following decades, but unlike Pesty, he wanted to annex the province to the Hungarian crown on the basis of the 1868 Hungarian-Croatian Compromise (whereas Pesty would have attached it directly to Hungary, together with Slavonia). Havass' vision harmonized with Croatian interests (at the time, Croats accounted for more than 80 percent of Dalmatia's population, and they were also in the majority in the seaside cities and even in the leadership positions in the seaside cities). The issue remained on the agenda in the press, however, and during World War I, the idea of annexing other southern Slavic provinces to the Hungarian crown were also warmed up, as were the visions of other figures (such as Jenő Cholnoky and Gusztáv Beksics) concerning the creation of a great Hungarian empire. Cséry Lajos, for instance, nurtured these kinds of ideas in his 1915 booklet *Új honfoglalás* (A new conquest of a new homeland).⁵⁶

In a book published in 1981, Bosnian Croatian historian Luka Đaković quoted minutes from meetings of the Hungarian Council of Ministers and claimed that the Hungarian government had already decided in 1915 to annex

56 One example of this imperial thinking is Jenő Cholnoky's *Jövők az uralkodóház* (Our future is the ruling house). For more on Hungarian imperial ideas in the Balkans, see Romsics, *A magyar birodalmi gondolat*, and also Dupcsik, *A Balkán képe Magyarországon*, 70–123.

Dalmatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and even Slavonia to Hungary.⁵⁷ Considering the delicate and complex public law relations and legal system of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, this claim has to be taken with reservations.

At a meeting on October 2, 1915, the Hungarian Council of Ministers did indeed deal with this important issue of public law.⁵⁸ This urgency of the question was in part a product of the events of the war. The suggestion had been made that Russian Poland should be annexed to the monarchy, more precisely the Austrian part, and the Hungarian leadership feared that this might compromise Hungary's position vis-à-vis Vienna. Balance could be reestablished, were this to happen, by annexing Dalmatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina to the Hungarian crown. This question was discussed at this October meeting of the Council of Ministers, where Prime Minister István Tisza was granted authorization to make a statement on the matter at the joint ministerial meeting in Vienna. Tisza did just thus at a meeting on October 6.⁵⁹ In my view, it is worth noting that the matter was not discussed behind the backs of the Croats, and indeed the document emphasizes that Tisza invited Baron Iván Skerlecz, the viceroy of Croatia, Slavonia, and Dalmatia, "as a public law figure with an primary interest in the aforementioned group of questions." At the Council of Ministers meeting, in connection with the annexation of Dalmatia to the Hungarian Crown, explicit and emphatic reference is made to Article XXX of the Law of 1868, which "almost obliges" the Hungarian party to annex the province to the Hungarian Crown, united with Croatia. The idea of annexing Slavonia directly to Hungary was indeed raised at the meeting, but mention of this is immediately followed in the minutes by the following text: "all these questions will have to be debated and determined at the time with the involvement of the competent Croatian-Slavonian and possibly Dalmatian figures."⁶⁰ Given the shaping ideas of the

57 Đaković, *Položaj Bosne i Hercegovine u austrougarskim koncepcijama*. The sources cited by Đaković, a Bosnian Croatian author, are included in Iványi, *Magyar minisztertanácsi jegyzőkönyvek*. They do not substantiate Đaković's contentions, however.

58 Iványi, *Magyar minisztertanácsi jegyzőkönyvek*, document 103, 189–97. The source publication includes the statement made on the matter in German as well, which Tisza presented at the joint ministerial meeting, with the addition of several new points.

59 Iványi, *Magyar minisztertanácsi jegyzőkönyvek*, 194.

60 Ibid. On page 193 of this work, a statement is found by Iván Skerlecz according to which the governor of Dalmatia told him in a conversation that the Dalmatian population did not want to be annexed to Croatia, but Skerlecz insists that this is not true. The latter was confirmed by the experiences on the ground of Ferenc Herczegh, who was neutral on the issue. According to Herczegh, the Dalmatian Catholics clearly regarded themselves as Croatian and wanted to unite with Croatia rather than with an independent Dalmatia. See Herczegh, *Szelek szárnyán*, Budapest, 1905.

period, I think it would hardly be an exaggeration to say that there were no Croatian political figures (including Magyar-friendly Croatian politicians) who would have agreed to the annexation by Hungary of Slavonia. And without asking the Croatian *Sabor*, this major change in public law could not have been implemented anyway, and the document clearly indicates that the Hungarian government had no intention of consulting with the Croatian *Sabor*.

Hungarian ideas and political aspirations concerning Croatian national integration, tripartite plans, or the question of which part of the empire Dalmatia or Bosnia-Herzegovina should belong to became irrelevant with the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy in 1918. The newly formed Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes created a new situation. For the Croats, however, this new situation bore an important affinity with the old. Where earlier, they had had to contend with Austrian and Hungarian centers of power, now, they found themselves under the sway of a Serbian center of power.

Croatian Attempts to Integrate Bosnian Muslims in the Interwar Period and during World War II

Between the two World Wars, the issue was still unresolved in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes.⁶¹ In many ways, the following contention by Ivo Banac reflects the reality of the earlier period of the rivalry between the Croat and Serb national projects for Muslims: “the Muslim masses in Bosnia instinctively felt that national alignment, whether to the Croat or the Serb side, was dividing their community, especially seeing as how the Croat-Serb conflict in Bosnia was particularly intense. Being a Serbian Muslim meant being anti-Croat and vice versa.”⁶² The Yugoslav state was firmly dominated by the Serbs between the two World Wars, and this had negative and even tragic consequences for Muslims as well (they suffered severe atrocities, including many deaths, at the hands of Serb nationalist extremists). The circumstances were particularly dire for the Muslim communities after the proclamation of a dictatorship by King Alexander in 1929. The Bosnian agrarian question took on a national dimension, and the land reform measures led to bloody clashes between Muslim landowners and Serb peasants, with the state power giving its support to the peasants.⁶³

61 For a detailed discussion of the question, see Džaja, *Politička realnost jugoslavenstva*.

62 Banac, *Nacionalno pitanje u Jugoslaviji*, 13.

63 For an objective account of the social and economic conditions of the first Yugoslav state, not slanted by national bias, see Biró, *A jugoszláv állam 1918–1939*.

This may explain why, although the JMO (the Yugoslav Muslim Organisation), which was led by Mehmed Spaho⁶⁴ and was the most powerful political party of the Muslim community, constantly tried to maneuver between Belgrade and Zagreb, most of the members of the Muslim intelligentsia at the time identified as Croats. Indeed, with the exception of Spaho, all the party's MPs identified as Croats. (It is perhaps worth noting that Spaho insisted on his Muslim identity, in the national sense, but one of his brothers identified as Croat and the other as Serb.) Serbian politician Svetozar Pribičević wrote the following on this: "The (Muslim) intelligentsia is overwhelmingly Croatian-oriented, and the masses blindly follow the intelligentsia."⁶⁵

This was the period when Safvet beg Bašagić, who as a subject of the Habsburg Monarchy had not identified himself as either Croatian or a Serbian Bosnian, openly declared himself Croatian. In 1931, he published *Znameniti Hrvati – Bošnjaci i Hercegovci u Turskoj carevini* (Illustrious Croats – Bosniaks and Herzegovinians in the Turkish Empire) a biographical encyclopedia of Bosnian Muslims who had played significant roles in the Ottoman Empire.⁶⁶

Bašagić was not the only Muslim intellectual to publish writings in the 1930s emphasizing the Croatian identity of Muslims, of course, and articles in this vein later proliferated in the press of the Independent State of Croatia. In 1936, for instance, Abdulatif Dizdarević wrote an article titled "Muslim Croats in Bosnia and Herzegovina," and Munir Šahinović Ekremov published an article titled "Muslims in the Past and Present of the Croatian Nation" in the 1938 yearbook of Croatian youth in Bosnia- Herzegovina.⁶⁷ In 1938, Muhamed Hadžihajić published a book on *Croatian Muslim literature before 1878* in Sarajevo.⁶⁸

Naturally, Catholic Croatian authors also wrote many such works in the interwar period emphasizing the Croatian identities of Muslims. One could mention Stjepan Banović, who published a book in 1927 titled *The Croatianness of the Old Dubrovnik and Bosnians and Herzegovinians*, or Mladen Lorković, whose well-known work *Narod i zemlja Hrvata* (The country and lands of the Croats) treated Muslims as part of the Croatian nation, and Krunoslav Draganović,

64 Kamberović, *Mehmed Spaho*.

65 Pribičević, *Diktatura kralja Aleksandra*, 24. Pribičević originally had it published in 1933, during his time as an émigré in France.

66 Bašagić, *Znameniti Hrvati Bošnjaci i Hercegovci*.

67 See Šarac and Primorac, *Hrvatsko podrijetlo bosansko-hercegovačkih Muslimana*.

68 Hadžihajić, *Hrvatska muslimanska književnost prije*, 1878. In socialist Yugoslavia, however, Hadžihajić related differently to the question of Muslim national identity. See the book by him published in 1947: Hadžihajić, *Od tradicije do identiteta: Geneza nacionalnog pitanja bosanskih muslimana*.

who expressed a similar view in his book *Hrvati i Herceg-Bosna* (Croats and Herzegovina), which he had published under the pseudonym Hrvoje Bošnjanić in 1940 (it was banned by the Yugoslav authorities).⁶⁹

Tensions between Croats and Serbians over Bosnia flared up in 1939, when, on the eve of World War II, the Croatian *banovina* was created as a step in the process towards the federalization of the previously centralized state (and as a compromise between Serbs and Croats that was intended to save the country). The question of the borders of this new political entity (which included not only historical Croatia, Slavonia, and Dalmatia but also territories in Bosnia and Herzegovina) led to conflicts not only between Croats and Serbs, but also between Croats and Muslims and even among Croats. Many of the members of the Croatian Peasant Party, which had negotiated the compromise, were against it. They claimed that “a Free Croatia without Bosnia would be like a man without lungs,” or they argued against the partition of Bosnia, insisting that “within Croatia, Bosnia occupies a special place with Hercegovina. Bosnia and Herzegovina are the core, the center, and the pillar of the Croatian territory (...) We will not allow Bosnia and Herzegovina to be partitioned!”⁷⁰

When Bosnia was eventually partitioned, this caused great consternation among Muslims. Although they unquestionably bore resentment for the Croats, their anger was directed primarily at the Serbs. Croatian politician of the Peasant Party Vladimir Maček wanted a referendum to determine which part of the Yugoslav state Bosnia would belong to, but the Serbs, fearing defeat, refused to go along.⁷¹ Džafer Kulenović, who was Mehmed Spaho's successor, suggested the creation of an autonomous and larger Bosnian federal entity, which would have included not only the parts earlier attached to Zeta and Drina *banovinas* (in 1939), but also the parts of the Sanjak of Novi Pazar that were inhabited by a Muslim majority. The Bosnian demand for autonomy increased after the great disappointment with the Croatian elite, and these endeavors indicated that unity based on religious grounds had come to the fore.

After Yugoslavia had been shattered by the Axis powers in World War II, Bosnia became part of the Independent State of Croatia. In 1939, the Ustaše was still strongly opposed to the partition of Bosnia. They espoused Starčević's

69 Draganović, “Hrvati i Herceg-Bosna (povodom polemike o nacionalnoj pripadnosti Herceg-Bosne).”

70 The citations of the ideas of the Croatian Peasant Party are taken from Ferdo Čulinović's book *Jugoslavija između dva rata*, vol. 2, 142. On the politics of the Croatian Peasant Party, see Matković, *Povijest Hrvatske seljačke stranke*.

71 On Maček's view concerning Bosnia, see the book by Ljubo Boban titled *Sporazum Cvetković-Maček*.

views and considered the Muslims and the entire province to be Croatian. Ante Pavelić, Prime Minister of the puppet state, referred to Muslims as the flower of the Croatian nation, and there were Muslims who, claiming to be Croats, played a leading role in the Ustaše government. Muslims were not unambiguously supportive of the Ustaše state and dictatorship (soon, masses of Croats turned against them). Horrific massacres of the inhabitants of Muslim villages by the Serbian nationalist royalist rebels, the Chetniks, drove Muslim crowds to the side of the Ustaše during the war (from which the Croatian state could not protect them), but there were still some initiatives among them for autonomy from the Croatian state, since they felt that, the rhetoric and praise notwithstanding, they had been given no real access to state power. They wanted to establish an autonomous Bosnia with German help and to create their own armed forces.⁷² The Nazi invaders went so far as to form an SS division (the Handsar Division) that was composed for the most part of Bosnian Muslims, with a small number of Croats, but this division was then taken to fight in France (it was later brought back, but it quickly soon crumbled in the fight against the partisans). By the end of the war, many of them ended up in the partisan formations fighting under Tito.

The Failure of the Croatian National Integration Experiment after World War II: The Rise of an Independent Bosnian Nation

In May 1945, as the war slowly ground to a halt, Croatian Ustaše troops fleeing to Austria were handed over by the British to the communist partisans, who quickly slaughtered tens of thousands of them. Many of the Croatian troops were Muslims.⁷³ Muslim intellectuals who identified as Croats were either killed in the war or forced to emigrate. The Croatian attempt to integrate Bosnian Muslims into the Croatian nation thus lost any real foundation, if for no other reason than simply because the Tito government resolutely blocked it and granted Bosnia-Herzegovina the status of a separate republic (though initially it did not declare Muslims a separate nation, but rather merely added them to the number of people belonging to the category of “unspecified Yugoslav nationality”). The Yugoslav communist leadership did not support the integration of Muslims into the Serbian nation either (though many Muslim intellectuals followed this

72 See most recently Hoare, Marko Attila: *Bosanski muslimani u drugom svjetskom ratu*.

73 This contention is made by Krunoslav Draganović in his book *The biological extermination of Croats*, but the demographic findings of Vladimir Žerjavić confirm that there were several thousand Muslims among those who were executed. See Žerjavić, *Opsesije i megalomanije*.

path in the leadership of the new state between 1945 and roughly 1965, mainly because of Serbian dominance within the party leadership in Bosnia). Finally, in the 1960s, the call for the recognition of Muslims as a separate nation became stronger and stronger, both among Muslims and in the party leadership. This recognition was officially granted in 1968. They were referred to as Muslims with a capital M, which was a significant step, as according to the rules of spelling in Croatian and Serbian, the names of nations are written with a capital letter, while the same term would designate religious affiliation if written with a lower-case first letter. The term Bosnian only began to be used as a designation of a nation after 1990.

For Croatian politicians and writers in exile and even for some Croatian nationalists still living in Yugoslavia, time stood still. They were not willing to acknowledge that in Bosnia and among the Muslim community in Bosnia, nationalist aspirations for independence (aspirations which earlier had perhaps often been latent but had also at times been quite evident) were beginning to rise to the fore. Croatian émigrés, who were opposed to the communist regime in Croatia, may well have believed that this behavior on the part of Muslims was merely a consequence of the dictatorship and that once this dictatorship had been overthrown, Muslims would “come back” to the Croatian nation. In an article titled “Herceg-Bosna i Hrvatska” (Bosnia-Herzegovina and Croatia), which was published by *Hrvatska revija* (Croatian Review) in Buenos Aires in 1963, exiled Franciscan historian Dominik Mandić’s argued for the Croatian origin and nationality of Muslims. Mandić proposed that Bosnia and Herzegovina should be an autonomous entity within a newly independent Croatian state.⁷⁴ Émigré authors such as Kazimir Katalinić and Ivo Korsky were still firmly convinced that Muslims were the “flower of the Croatian nation.”⁷⁵ Admittedly, in its 1988 program, the Croatian Republican Party in exile had written about the relationship between Muslim and Catholic Croats and Bosnia and the more “narrowly understood” Croatia that “despite their identical Croatian origins, historical events have given these two parts of Croatia different characteristics.” The party therefore suggested that the territory of the then Croatian Socialist

74 Mandić, “Herceg-Bosna i Hrvatska.”

75 Katalinić, *Argumenti*. Also Korsky *Hrvatski nacionalizam*. I have drawn on the views of Korsky and Katalinić as expressed in their books printed in Zagreb in the 1990s. When these books were published, both Korsky and Katalinić were living as émigrés.

Republic and Bosnia-Herzegovina should be transformed into a Croatian federal state consisting of two parts.⁷⁶

Franjo Tuđman, one of the Croatian politicians living in Yugoslavia (for a time in a state of internal exile), also embraced the notion that the Muslim communities of the region would identify as Croats if given the chance. Tuđman had fought as a member of the partisans during the war. He then served in Tito's regime before falling afoul of the dictatorship and even being imprisoned. He served as the first president of independent Croatia during the breakup of Yugoslavia, and he was in office when the referendum on Croatian independence was held in 1991. In his 1982 book *Nacionalno pitanje u suvremenoj Europi* (The National Question in Contemporary Europe), Tuđman claimed that the "vast majority of the Muslim population... when given the opportunity, always considered themselves part of the Croatian nation." He also insisted that Bosnia was "the natural hinterland of Croatia, and its separation from Croatia had fatal consequences."⁷⁷

In his book, Tuđman proposed that, just as multi-ethnic Vojvodina or Albanian-majority Kosovo were part of Serbia as autonomous provinces, Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina should form a federal entity within Yugoslavia. However, when Yugoslavia broke up in 1991–92, the Muslim Bosnian political elite did not cherish the political aspirations that Zagreb had expected them to have. In an attempt to give expression to its own interests, Bosnia-Herzegovina first tried to stay out of the war, and when this failed in the wake of the Serbian invasion, it was compelled to enter into an alliance with the Croats.

Attempts to implement the various international plans for the internal partition of Bosnia (the Vance-Owen plan, the Owen-Stoltenberg plan, etc.) turned Croats and Bosnians (who had been allies of a sort) against each other, in part simply because the manner in which these plans were implemented depended almost entirely on circumstances on the ground, or in other words, if there were armed Croats on the ground, a Croatian administration was set up, if there were armed Serbs, a Serbian administration, and if there were armed Bosnians, a Bosnian administration. The proposal made to the Croatian side by Slobodan Milošević regarding the partition of Bosnia (which from a territorial point of view was simply the 1939 solution, which meant a loss of land for the Muslim side) only exacerbated the situation.

76 Katalinić: *Argumenti*, 83.

77 Tuđman, *Nacionalno pitanje u suvremenoj Europi*, 142.

The war which broke out between Croats and Bosnians in late 1992 and early 1993, which involved a number of serious acts of war on both sides (Croats in and around Mostar, Bosnians in central Bosnia), only came to an end in 1994 in large part as a consequence of US mediation. In the Washington Agreement, peace was concluded between the Croatian and Bosnian sides (the following year, they fought together again against the Bosnian Serb forces). They also agreed to establish a Bosnian-Croat Federation, which was enshrined in the Dayton Peace Treaty of December 14, 1995. The armed confrontation, which lasted a few months and did not include all the areas where Bosnians and Croats lived together (for instance, in Tuzla and the Sava River region, Bosnians and Croats continued to fight together against Serbian forces), finally put an indisputable end to the centuries-old Croatian attempts to integrate the Muslims of the region into the Croatian nation and the Croatian national narrative and relegated the idea of a Croat Bosnia to the world of historical myth.⁷⁸

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⁷⁸ According to Bosnian writer Ivan Lovrenović, if one wanted to define Bosnia from an exclusively national-political point of view, that would be a dead end, which is why both Kállay and the Yugoslav leadership under Tito failed. Lovrenović, *A régi Bosznia*, 144.

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