

# Nationalism in Contemporary Europe

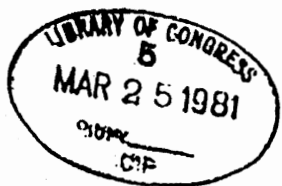
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established (in the documents of the Second Session of AVNOJ<sup>6</sup>). Only at the end of the war was Boka made an integral part of Montenegro.

In its pre-war national program the CPY proposed that Vojvodina should be a separate federal unit in the future Yugoslav federation. During the war separate representative bodies of the National Liberation Movement (General Staff and Main National Liberation Committee) were set up for Vojvodina. During the Second Session of AVNOJ the status of Vojvodina was not settled. Vojvodina was treated separately, like the other federal units, in the verification of the delegates from the various territories in the Proclamation at the end of the Session. But there is no explicit mention of it in the decision creating the federal organization. The revolutionary representative organs made the decision to unite Vojvodina with Serbia. It was the Main National Liberation Committee of Vojvodina, which took over civil rule in February 1945, that proposed the inclusion of Vojvodina into Serbia as an autonomous unit. In March this proposal was accepted by the Provincial Committee of the CPY (and from then on the CPY organization for Vojvodina joined with the Serbian CP) and the Anti-Fascist Assembly of Serbia. The First Assembly of people's deputies for Vojvodina (31st July 1945) then passed a constitutional decision along these lines and the Third Session of AVNOJ (10th August 1945) accepted the decision made by the First Assembly of people's deputies for Vojvodina on the unification of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina with federal Serbia.<sup>7</sup> The sources make no mention of the way in which the boundaries of Vojvodina were fixed.

Several reasons could be given in favor of the decision to unite Vojvodina with Serbia. The two areas had strong historical, national, economic and cultural ties, and their union was also in the interest of the state community as a whole. The fixing of the boundaries for Vojvodina and Serbia is a different question and will be discussed later. However, there are many indications that the same logical criteria were not applied in the case of Bosnia and Hercegovina,

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 166, 211-2, 235.

<sup>7</sup>As note 6, *Društveno-političke zajednice*, vol. II, *Socijalističke republike i autonomne pokrajine*, Belgrade, 1968, pp. 627-8.

which according to the same yardstick should have been made a part of the Croatian federal unit. Bosnia and Hercegovina was declared a separate federal republic within the borders established during the Turkish occupation. But large parts of Croatia had been incorporated into Bosnia by the Turks. Furthermore Bosnia and Hercegovina were historically linked with Croatia and they together comprise an indivisible geographic and economic entity. Bosnia and Hercegovina occupy the central part of this whole, separating southern (Dalmatian) from northern (Pannonian) Croatia. The creation of a separate Bosnia and Hercegovina makes the territorial and geographic position of Croatia extremely unnatural in the economic sense and, therefore, in the broadest national-political sense, very unfavorable for life and development and in the narrower administrative sense unsuitable and disadvantageous.

These factors largely explain why the 1939 agreement between Belgrade (Prince Paul and the Cvetkovic government) and Zagreb (Maček's Croatian leadership) included the following areas of Bosnia into the Banovina of Croatia: the whole of western Hercegovina and Mostar and those Bosnian districts where the Croats have a clear majority (Bugojno, Fojnica, Travnik, Derventa, Gradačac, Brčko). The fate of the remaining territory of Bosnia and Hercegovina, as inherited from Turkish and Austro-Hungarian times, and their autonomy or division were to be decided during the final reorganization of the state.

There is little doubt that the main reasons for declaring Bosnia and Hercegovina a separate federal state was the mixed composition of its population and the fact that since the last century the greatest controversy between Croatian and Serbian political leaders concerned the ownership of Bosnia and Hercegovina. The decision, therefore, to make Bosnia and Hercegovina separate federal unit was purportedly taken as an unbiased standpoint. Croatia laid claim to Bosnia and Hercegovina on the basis of a common history and the fact that they constituted a geo-political whole. Serbia's claim was based on "natural right" as the Serbian, Orthodox population constituted a plurality (about 44 percent) while the Croatian, Catholic made up about 23 percent of the population and the Moslems 33 percent. Though the Orthodox population was in the minority as compared with the ethnically largely identical Catholic and Moslem population, which together

comprised a majority of 56 percent (which has now grown to 62 percent) the Serbian side overly stressed the "right of the sword" since Serbia had entered World War I because of Bosnia and Hercegovina and had been a victor in the conflict.

An objective examination of the numerical composition of the population of Bosnia and Hercegovina cannot ignore that the majority of the Moslems is in its ethnic character and speech incontrovertibly of Croatian origin. Despite religious and cultural distinctions created by history, the vast majority of the Moslems declared themselves Croats whenever an opportunity arose. This was done in 1920 by the Moslem representatives in the Constituent Assembly. It was done by the Moslem intelligentsia and masses during the Banovina Hrvatska and the Independent State of Croatia, which all Moslems and Catholics of Bosnia and Hercegovina at first accepted as their own state. The historical fact regarding the attitude in World War II of the Moslem population is bolstered by many examples in the war memoirs of Milovan Djilas, a member of the top CPY leadership. The fact that the Moslem population was largely of Croatian persuasion was recognized between the two wars by Svetozar Pribičević, who was one of the most uncompromising champions of greater Serbian unitarianism. About the "Bosnian Moslems" he wrote: "Their intellectuals are in the vast majority of Croatian orientated; and the masses blindly follow the intellectuals in all political actions. There should be no mistake about this. The hegemonistic system in particular...has meant that the Bosnian Moslems in their aspirations and their views on the future completely identify themselves with the Croats. Any Serbian statesman who fails to take this fact into account cannot be considered seriously."<sup>8</sup> On the basis of these facts we arrive at the conclusion that a majority of the population of Bosnia and Hercegovina is Croatian. On the other hand the geoeconomic connection of Bosnia with the other Croatian lands is such that neither Croatia in its present boundaries nor the separate Bosnia and Hercegovina possess the conditions for a separate, normal development.

<sup>8</sup>M. Djilas, *Wartime*, pp. 11-14, 39, 63, 129-130, 132, 135, 139-141, 180, 228, 259, 448, etc. S. Pribičević, *Diktatura Kralja Aleksandra*, Belgrade, 1953, p. 24.

Moreover, as regards the unification of Serbia and Vojvodina, the national, political and economic factors were considered despite the greater diversity of population. Historical factors were respected in the inclusion into Serbia of Kosovo, though the Serbs and Montenegrins are in the minority compared with the far more numerous Albanians. Secular historical consideration dictated division of Sandžak, where the majority is Moslem. If applied to Bosnia and Hercegovina all these reasons testified with equal force to the fact that the union would be in the interests of not only Croatia but also Bosnia and Hercegovina. Such a union would be in the interest of Croatia, Bosnia and Hercegovina and all of Yugoslavia and would create more favorable conditions for internal Yugoslav harmony and its political, cultural and economic development.

An even greater inconsistency, though not with such fateful significance, made with respect to the exits of Bosnia and Hercegovina to the sea. Under Turkish rule, Bosnia and Hercegovina touched the Adriatic in two spots one was at Klek and the other at Sutovina. Both these areas were given Turkey by the Požarevac treaty (1718) at the initiative of the Dubrovnik republic, which thereby succeeded in separating its territory from that of Venice and ensured its own unhindered trade with Turkey. These outlets remained under Bosnia and Hercegovina during the Austrian rule. After 1918, when the new Kingdom of Yugoslavia was created the administrative and political divisions did not respect the situation inherited from the Turkish occupation but were based on other economic and political consideration. In Federal Socialist Yugoslavia, Bosnia and Hercegovina were given the borders dating from the period of Turkish occupation and the Austrian annexation, with the one difference that now it has only one outlet to the sea—the one at Klek on the territory of Croatia, while the other at Sutovina was given to Montenegro. Through this inconsistency the Republic of Croatia was divided into two parts, both of which were, in a historical sense incontrovertibly Croatian. There would not have been this inconsistency if the Sutovina outlet had been left to Bosnia and Hercegovina. The historical and political consequences of this act were particularly serious when one takes into account that greater-Serbian expansionism, right up to the recent past, aimed at gaining both Dubrovnik and southern Dalmatia in addition to Bosnia and Hercegovina.