

**Yugoslav Unification in the Work of Hamdija Kapidžić:
Bosnia and Herzegovina in the Austro-Hungarian Period
(Articles and Discussions): between Historical Facts
and Ideological Revisionism***

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Abstract: This paper uses Hamdija Kapidžić's study *Bosna i Hercegovina u vrijeme austrougarske vladavine (članci i rasprave)* [hereinafter: Bosnia and Herzegovina in the Austro-Hungarian period (Articles and Discussions)] in order to question the way in which the socialist historiography of Bosnia and Herzegovina observed the Yugoslav unification in 1918, and the extent to which historical revisionism was present in that approach. The analysis focuses on the scientific profile of researchers, relevance of sources, the connection between the source and the conclusion for the purpose of determining the extent to which Kapidžić's theses are scientifically founded and the extent to which they were a product of historical revisionism.

Key words: Austro-Hungarian administration, Yugoslav unification, 1918, Hamdija Kapidžić, historical revisionism

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George G. Igers' words that *every historiography comes from the perspective that is connected to the people, time and culture, and, thus, contains an ideological element* are inspiring also in the case of Yugoslav historiography in the socialist period.¹ Themes in the sphere of political history always caused social, political and cultural repercussions in the socialist Yugoslavia because of the dynamics of ideological

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¹ Igers 2014, 110.

connectedness, and numerous studies written in this period were subject of conflicts and intellectual battles due to the controversial nature of the issues thematised. Hamdija Kapidžić's book *Bosnia and Herzegovina in the Austro-Hungarian period (Articles and Discussions)*, written in the era of Yugoslav socialism, did not cause fierce discussions, nor was it a subject of scientific debates, but it is a decent example of historiography in the socialist period, since it is also characterised by the spirit of the epoch it was created in.²

Motivated by David Thelen's thought that *a historian's professional task is to provide contextualisation, comparison and structural explanations, and to emphasise the different voices and experience*, my intention in this paper is to assess the way in which BiH historiography of the socialist period had perceived the Yugoslav unification of the 1918, on the example of the study book *Bosnia and Herzegovina in the Austro-Hungarian period (Articles and Discussions)*, as well as whether and to what extent was historical revisionism present in the approach.³ Hence, the aim of this paper is to examine the line of argumentation, to analyse the relevance of the used archival material, to determine the connection between the source background and the conclusions drawn, all in order to determine the credibility of Kapidžić's theses and objectivity of his conclusions, and present the extent to which they were, in fact, drawn on the basis of the used source background on the one hand, and the extent to which they were a result of the desire to present the interpreted framework in accordance with the postulates of the then-ruling ideology.

Thematical Framework of the Study Bosnia and Herzegovina in the Austro-Hungarian period (Articles and Discussions)

After the monograph *Hercegovački ustanak 1882. godine* [The Herzegovina Uprising of 1882],⁴ the first comprehensive study on this historical moment written as a result of a thorough research endeavour based on the original archival sources, was published, Hamdija Kapidžić conducted a research in the following period focusing on different themes in the sphere of political and cultural history of Bosnia and Herzegovina (1878-1918), by which he had confirmed his research interest in not only the issues of the uprising that was also the focus of his interest, having published numerous articles about it, apart from the monograph, but also in the position of

² Kapidžić 1968.

³ Rosenzweig / Thelen 1998, 51.

⁴ Kapidžić 1958. Other papers published in this period also confirm that the socialist historiography was interested in the issues of the uprising. In accordance with the Marxist approach to history, the uprising was described as revolutionary: Ekmečić 1960; Kapidžić 1983, 9 – 20; Pavićević, 1986; Bogićević 1975, 1129–1142.

and events in Bosnia and Herzegovina under Austro-Hungarian administration.⁵ That is why the entire following decade (1958-1968) was characterised by the production of papers written with an intention to illustrate the *occupational* system that the Austro-Hungary established in Bosnia and Herzegovina, lasting until the end of WWI.⁶ As a result of the meticulous and exhaustive research work, the book *Bosnia and Herzegovina in the Austro-Hungarian Period (Articles and Discussions)* was published in 1968, containing all the papers written in the then-recent period.

Although Kapidžić's study encompasses two sections: political and cultural history, the accent was placed to the political history that was not presented as a whole, in the sense that the is not a chronological succession of the interpretation of the military and political issues in the period of Austro-Hungarian rule in Bosnia and Herzegovina, but, the thorough approach to the topic and the substantial archival material make this book a significant contribution to historiography of this period, especially if one keeps in mind that some highly important issues from the Austro-Hungarian period in Bosnia and Herzegovina were thematised. Keeping in mind Kapidžić's monograph on the Herzegovina uprising, and the selected topics in the sphere of political history presented in the first part of this book (*The Movement for Migration of the Serb Population from Herzegovina to Serbia in 1902*,⁷ *Preparation of the Constitutional Period in Bosnia and Herzegovina (1908-1910)*,⁸ *Turmoil in the Austro-Hungarian Politics in 1912*,⁹ *Bilinski and Steinbach Entrepreneurship in West Bosnia*,¹⁰ *The Skadar Crisis and Extraordinary Measures in Bosnia and Herzegovina in May 1913*,¹¹ *Austro-Hungarian Politics in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Yugoslav Question during World War I*,¹² *An Attempt of Unification of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia in November 1918*¹³), it is evident that the period from 1882 to 1902 was untreated in Kapidžić's work.

In the first part of the study, Kapidžić attempted to reconstruct the main directions of Austro-Hungarian politics in Bosnia and Herzegovina, through the prism of relations between the authority towards the occupied/annexed area, especially through the issue of the relationship of the authority towards the local population,

⁵ Some of the papers are: Kapidžić 1951; Kapidžić 1954.

⁶ Some of the papers published in that period were: Kapidžić 1959, 122–166; Kapidžić 1962, 5–51; Kapidžić 1965, 33–46.

⁷ Kapidžić 1968, 5–45.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 46–100.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 101–139.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 140–155.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 156–198.

¹² *Ibid.*, 199–262.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 263–283.

all for the purpose of presenting the weight of socio-economic position imposed by the *occupational* authority through exceptional and other measures. By placing the focus of his interest to the issue of the Yugoslav unification and, conditionally, the *liberation* from the occupational authority, he meticulously studied the political events and socio-political relations in Bosnia and Herzegovina in the first decades of the 20th century, considering them to have been highly significant factors in the sense of changes that the occupation and then the annexation of 1908 brought to the BiH society. That is why I am of the opinion that the aforementioned articles, in their content and interpreted facts, as well as the conclusions drawn, were an introduction to the paper *Austrougarska politika i jugoslavenko pitanje za vrijeme Prvog svjetskog rata* [Austro-Hungarian Politics and the Yugoslav Question during World War I].¹⁴

The second section of the study focuses on cultural history (*An Attempt of Creating Geography of Bosnia and Herzegovina during the Kalay Regime*,¹⁵ *Kalay's Attitude towards Establishing the Zora Magazine from Mostar*,¹⁶ *Institute for Research of the Balkans in Sarajevo 1904-1908 (The Intention and Plans)*,¹⁷ *Austro-Hungarian Politicians and the Issue of Establishing the University of Sarajevo in 1913 (373-377)*,¹⁸ *The Bosnian Assembly and the Death of Leo Tolstoy*,¹⁹ *An Attempt of Establishing a Permanent Theatre in Sarajevo in 1913*²⁰) where Kapidžić, on the example of the construction of the prominent cultural and educational institutions, tried to examine the attitude of Austro-Hungarian rule towards cultural endeavours of the first decade of the 20th century, all in an attempt to find an answer to the question whether and to what extent the progress and modernisation of Bosnia and Herzegovina could be discussed in the cultural and scientific perspective within the Austro-Hungarian *occupational* system.

Kapidžić's Scientific Profile

Since a critical analysis of historiography from the socialist period inevitably entails an analysis of the researcher's profile, their political determination and public activity, for the purpose of achieving scientific objectivity that narrowly correlates

¹⁴ Kapidžić published this paper in the *Godišnjak Istorijškog društva Bosne i Hercegovine* [Yearbook of the Society for the Study of History of Bosnia and Herzegovina] in 1957, as well as in the following year, 1958, in the *Pregled* journal. See: Kapidžić 1958a, 367 – 376; Kapidžić 1958b, 7– 55.

¹⁵ Kapidžić 1968, 284–301.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 302–310.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 311–372.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 373–377.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 378–381.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 382–395.

to the relationship between the researcher and the ruling ideology, I will present several facts from Kapidžić's biography, which I deem important in the context of the analysis I will conduct:

Hamdija Kapidžić (1904-1974), a historian and a pedagogue, an author and a reviewer of collections of historically important material, an inevitable name of BiH historiography of the 20th century, graduated in 1928 from the Department of History, Faculty of Philosophy in Belgrade. In the 1948/1949 period, he was highly active in politics, and was an inspector at the Ministry of Education.²¹ Having defended his doctoral dissertation entitled *The Herzegovina Uprising in 1882* in Belgrade, he was elected an assistant professor at the Faculty of Philosophy in Sarajevo in 1952, on the subject *History of the Peoples of Yugoslavia – Modern Period*.²² In 1957 he was elected an associate professor and, five years later, a full professor.²³ Apart from being appointed Head of the Chair for History at the Faculty of Philosophy in Sarajevo, he confirmed his scientific authority in 1969, when, upon the proposal of academicians Anto Babić and Branislav Đurđev, he was elected a corresponding member of the Academy of Arts and Sciences of Bosnia and Herzegovina, presiding over the committee that was tasked with writing the history of Bosnia and Herzegovina under the Austro-Hungarian rule.²⁴ In 1964, Kapidžić received the 27 July Award of BiH for his engagement in establishing the Society for the Study of History of BiH, where he was also an editorial member, and later also the editor-in-chief, for the efforts he put in the initiation of the *Glasnik Arhiva i Društva Arhivskih radnika BiH* [a journal], and, finally, for the excessive and highly fruitful scientific and research work that included over 130 bibliographical units. Also, in 1969, he received the Sixth April Award of Sarajevo.²⁵ It is interesting that, during the World War II, in 1941, Kapidžić, in an expression of judgment against the Independent State of Croatia, signed, together with a group of esteemed Muslims and public persons, the Resolution against the Persecution of Serbs and Jews by the Ustaše, supporting thus the anti-fascist fight.²⁶

On the basis of the aforementioned facts, it is evident that Kapidžić's scientific efforts were certainly in accordance with what the past system and the ruling ideology imposed, since he had received the confirmation by that system, having received two highly important recognitions: the 27 July Award, which was the award of the Socialist Republic, and the Sixth April Award, while, as a corresponding member of

²¹ Redžić 2003, 7.

²² Ibid.

²³ Balić 1974, 323.

²⁴ Redžić 2003, 8.

²⁵ Ibid., 9.

²⁶ Ibid., 10.

the Academy of Arts and Sciences of BiH, he was given a highly important task of presiding over the committee that implemented a project related to the history of Austro-Hungarian period. The very fact that he had previously been engaged as an inspector at the Ministry of Education (1948/1949)²⁷ implies that it was an esteemed, confidential and a close person the system at the time, which could have influenced, but not necessarily did influence Kapidžić's later scientific and research activities.²⁸

In an attempt to determine whether Kapidžić, as a historian, remained up to the task, and whether and to what extent his scientific methods were striving for an objective study of history or were mere historiographical production of what the system at that time favoured (for which there is real basis keeping in mind the personality profile I have just presented), and in order to determine the connection between the source and the conclusion, I will reflect upon the source background as well as upon the methodology Kapidžić applied.²⁹

A Critical Review of Used Sources and Literature

In the closing deliberations of the paper entitled *Austrougarska politika i jugoslavensko pitanje za vrijeme Prvog svjetskog rata* [hereinafter: Austro-Hungarian Politics and the Yugoslav Question during World War I] that will here be subject to a historiographic analysis, reflecting upon the archival material Kapidžić stated:

*(...) I accentuate that it (the expose) was presented mostly on the basis of the archival material, primarily confidential reports and personal correspondence between General Sarkotić and ministers of Joint Ministries of Finances in Vienna. From that very lively discussion, one can see the contours of the main political conceptions of Austro-Hungarian politics in Bosnia and Herzegovina during WWI.*³⁰

It truly is indisputable that Kapidžić did use a comprehensive volume of, mostly, unused archival material, which was a product of administrative discourse. For the purpose of achieving *a clearer understanding of the main political line of Austro-Hungarian statesmen* and in an attempt to paint *the contours of the main political conceptions of Austro-Hungarian politics in Bosnia and Herzegovina*, Kapidžić's

²⁷ That was not only political, but also a professional function.

²⁸ Such a position had at least enabled him to gain access to confidential archival material, for example, the Presidial Writings Collection of the ZMF fund and the private registries, access to which was especially limited in the socialist period, while the archival material was filtered. See: Šabotić 2007, 275–285.

²⁹ I am of the opinion that a historian, as much as they attempted, can never achieve full objectivity, i.e., can never remain outside the social context in which they work. The historian's social position, national or ideological affiliation, will always influence their activities. However, striving towards an objective study of history is an ideal that all historians should strive to achieve.

³⁰ Kapidžić 1968, 260.

approach to the nature of the archival material was fully justifiable, especially if one keeps in mind the fact that the politics of one country can best be reconstructed through the official discourse, i.e. the material that originates in the administrative provenance.³¹ However, the sole use of this type of documents (*the uniform material*) leaves room for criticism since it frequently offers only one perspective, the *top down* perspective – created by the same, Austro-Hungarian authority – opposite the *bottom up* perspective, which includes different perceptions of the authority by BiH society where the so-called young politics ruled (Muslim, Croatian, Serbian, and, especially, the Yugoslav, which was the focus of the interest). Considering a specific state and legal position of Bosnia and Herzegovina within the dualistic system of the Monarchy, the politics of Austro-Hungarian Monarchy in Bosnia and Herzegovina during WWI, and, especially, the Yugoslav question, cannot be entirely perceived without including the bottom-up perspective, which is, in combination with the uniform materials about only a one-sided view of the issue, without a *feedback* that had come from the BiH population, almost impossible to achieve.

Kapidžić used the archives of the National Archives in Sarajevo, focusing on the fundus of the Joint Ministry of Finances (*Presidial and Private registrature*), abundant with the lively and highly confidential correspondences between General Sarkotić and ministers of the Joint Ministries of Finances in Vienna. Considering the role and importance of the National Government as the executive organ of the Joint Ministry of Finances, which had also partaken in the creation of politics, the fundus of the National Government in Sarajevo is substantial, but has remained unused. A part of the lively correspondences between these two organs is also preserved in the Joint Ministry of Finances' fundus, but the documents such as complaints of the local population to the National Government which best illustrate the mood of the local population towards, as Kapidžić observes, the *occupational* authority were left out. Also, the discussion of politics at the highest level, which includes the relationship between the Joint Ministry of Finances and the governments of Austria and Hungary, the archives of which can be found in the National Archives in Vienna, is also left out in the paper.

Kapidžić focused on the literature he deemed trustworthy, such as: Vojislav Bogičević who, in the 1955 edition of the *Godišnjak Istorijskog društva u BiH* [a journal], wrote about the exceptional measures of the Austro-Hungarian rule in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1913,³² or Todor Kruševac and his 1960 study entitled *Sarajevo pod austrougarskom upravom (1878-1918)* [Sarajevo under Austro-Hungarian Administration (1878-1918)].³³ I notice that the titles Kapidžić refers

³¹ Kapidžić 1968, 261.

³² Bogičević 1955, 209–218.

³³ Kruševac 1960.

to in his work were written either during the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, or in the socialist period.

In an attempt to illustrate the tone of the papers Kapidžić refers to, I will here cite a section from Todor Kuševac's book:

*(...) we are of the opinion that it is evermore necessary to emphasise what the ethical unity of the local population is; the population that has managed to sustain itself for centuries in spite of the religious diversification and the rule of other, the population that, in the time of the new occupation, especially in the area of the capital city, was exposed to strong attacks, when its distinctive features came to prominence convincingly in the resistance it had shown to the last occupier.*³⁴

In another place, Kruševac, emphasising the imperialist intentions of the foreign authority, states:

*Without a doubt, this is a state of the developmental misbalance, deliberately maintained between the city and the rural area, in accordance with the famous principle divide et impera, that has so many times been successfully applied in this country.*³⁵

It is evident that even in the sense of the literature used, Kapidžić chose the papers that were in accordance with the ruling socialist ideology and that emphasised the colonial and imperialist character of the Austro-Hungarian rule, the revolutionary spirit of the local population that was against the foreign rule, showing thus, in the Marxist style, conflicts and rebellions as a history of the class struggle.

In Accordance with Marxism or Facts?

Inspired by the title of the book by Magdalena Najbar Agičić, *U skladu sa marksizmom ili činjenicama* [In Accordance with Marxism or Facts]³⁶, in the following section of the paper I will try to examine the connection between the source background and the conclusion, and to determine the credibility and authenticity of Kapidžić's conclusions, for the purpose of determining the extent to which they were drawn from the historical facts, and also the extent to which they were a product of historical revisionism. It is undisputable that the interpretation of a historical source differs between researchers, and that it can to a large extent depend on the motifs and impulses of the very author who is trying to present the events in accordance with the ruling ideology, not in accordance with the principles and methodology of history as a science, which practically opens door to the source material being *manipulated*. In theory, determining a historical truth should be, in

³⁴ Kruševac 1960, 6.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 453.

³⁶ Najbar Agičić 2013.

the spirit of critical historiography, an ideal towards which a historian strives, and the only motif of his/her activity.

Although, in the sense of contribution to the science of Bosnia and Herzegovina of the Austro-Hungarian period, the value of Kapidžić's work is indisputable, reading his texts leaves an impression that he tried to interpret historical facts in accordance with the ideological framework, sometimes presenting superficial and insufficiently argued conclusions, characterised by incomplete argumentation and "slightly" distorted analogies. That is especially obvious in places where Kapidžić speaks of the Yugoslav idea of unification, to which he ascribes revolutionary characteristics, in accordance with the Marxist approach, leaving out an explanation on what basis he draws such a conclusion (what historical sources, or what revolutionary characteristics did he see in the Yugoslav movement). The following examples are an illustration of that:

*From annexation to the outbreak of WWI, the Yugoslav idea strongly developed in all our lands, and it gained a specific revolutionary trait in Bosnia and Herzegovina.*³⁷

or

*Having presented the history of his political attempts and the resistance of the Hungarian politicians, Spitzmiller emphasised that the only possible salvation of the Monarchy did not happen because of the resistance of Hungarian politicians. Influenced by the revolutionary events in Hungary, Hungarian statesmen Tusa, Buryan and Wekerle had already assumed the position of a personal union as the only connection with Austria, demanding a separate ministry of foreign affairs and war, which prevented the dual form of the state structure.*³⁸

Even in view of the influence of the October Revolution to the events in the Monarchy, Kapidžić left an insufficiently convincing impression:

*Under the influence of the October Revolution and due to a very difficult situation in the army, there was a rebellion in the Austro-Hungarian navy in Boka Kotorska, in early February 1918. Also, a small military rebellion took place in Bosnia and Herzegovina. On 10 February 1918, there was a rebellion in the units of the 22nd Dalmatian Regiment in Mostar. Observations of General Sarkotić, who was also a military commander of Dalmatia, are also telling. He primarily ascribed the influence of the Yugoslav propaganda to these movements, and he proposed extraordinary measures in Dalmatia.*³⁹

³⁷ Kapidžić 1968, 260.

³⁸ Ibid., 259.

³⁹ Kapidžić 1968, 245.

Unlike Kapidžić's first conclusion about the direct influence of the October Revolution to the rebellion of sailors in Boka Kotorska, even in Bosnia and Herzegovina, where he lacks the original argument, Kapidžić's second thesis on Sarkotić's remarks, where he explained these *revolutionary movements* as influenced by the Yugoslav propaganda, is an example of the tendency to interpret a historical source in accordance with the postulates of the ruling ideology. Namely, Kapidžić quoted DAS, Priv. Reg, NO 77/1918 in a footnote, presenting Sarkotić's words:

In Dalmatien selbst ist die Einführung der Staatspolizei in der Bocche und dann auch in Ragusa und Spalato ein Gebot dringender Notwendigkeit.

which translates as:

In very Dalmatia, there is an imperative of introducing the national police in Boka Kotorska, and then also in Dubrovnik and Split.

What had drawn him to the conclusion on the influence of the Yugoslav propaganda to the rebellion of sailors remains unclear.

The Approach to the Issue of Unification

*The strong and profuse Yugoslav movement*⁴⁰ that *continually* and with specific *revolutionary* characteristics developed in Bosnia and Herzegovina, since the time of the annexation,⁴¹ and which gained an even greater swing *under the influence of the October Revolution*, according to Kapidžić, resulted in the final liberation of the "brotherly" peoples from the occupier and in the creation of a unified country of all Yugoslav peoples.⁴² The unification, as the turning point in the history of the Yugoslav peoples, thus, came from a strong Yugoslavian idea imbued with a strong

⁴⁰ ... for, the Monarchy is under an even greater threat from Yugoslavs than Czechs, who are occupied by Germans and Hungarians.

and *The Yugoslav movement, however, was constantly expanding. Sarkotić further stated that he feared the Yugoslav movement in Croatia had gained such proportions that it would assume victory over the elements loyal to the dynasty.* Kapidžić 1968, 243, 254 and 355; Recent BiH historiography that dealt with the issue of the Yugoslav unification from 1918, demystified Kapidžić's thesis on the mass support to the Yugoslav idea. And while on the one hand H. Kamberović proved that the political elite from Bosnia and Herzegovina, in view of the unification, did not have a unified attitude, and that *there had for a long time been wandering and floundering among the political elite*, V. Katz, on the other hand, emphasised a non-unified attitude of Croats regarding the creation of the Yugoslav country. See: Kamberović 2009, 91–107. and Katz 2009, 108–121.

⁴¹ *From annexation to the outbreak of WWI, the Yugoslav idea strongly developed in all our lands, and it gained a specific revolutionary trait in Bosnia and Herzegovina.* Kapidžić 1968, 260.

⁴² *Sarkotić, as the bearer of the exclusive authority in BiH, through the agreement with certain ministers that were responsible for BiH, attempted to prevent the liberation and unification of the Yugoslav peoples by the trialist solution of the Yugoslav question, the way Franz Ferdinand had inaugurated it.* Kapidžić 1968, 260.

revolutionary spirit for liberation. Since the revolutionary events, in accordance with the Marxist teachings, lead to the great historical and global events, the Habsburg Monarchy finally disappeared, exhausted by the war and the revolutionary awakening of peoples. The new Yugoslav state formed on those rubbles.

In accordance with the well-known and, in the socialist period encouraged, concept of *brotherhood and unity*, Kapidžić disregards and conceals the intensity and the tone of discussions between the Serbian Government and the Yugoslav Committee, caused by disagreements over the organisation of the future unified country. Although the antagonism between the Serbian Government that advocated a centralist organisation of the country and the Yugoslav Committee which, fearing the Serbian domination and the Serbian orthodox exclusivism, advocated federalism, grew with the approaching end of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and reached the melting point at the Corfu meeting, Kapidžić did not ascribe any particular significance to the conflict. Instead, omitting the explanation about the cause and the direction in which the Yugoslav question was exacerbating, he said:

*(...) from the Corfu declaration of 20 July 1917, the vivid effort of the Yugoslav emigration to penetrate with its ideas into the Yugoslav lands of the Monarchy, as well as the final agreement between the Yugoslav Committee and the Serbian Government on the future organisation of the new Yugoslav state, were increasingly leading towards the exacerbation of the Yugoslav question in the Monarchy.*⁴³

Although the Corfu Declaration of 20 July 1917 foresaw that the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes be organised as a constitutional, democratic and parliamentary monarchy with *the Serb dynasty at the head*,⁴⁴ Kapidžić left out the organisation of the future state and emphasised only *the principle of the people's self-determination as the leading motif in solving the Yugoslav question*.⁴⁵

Without negating the existence of antagonism of the Yugoslav peoples towards the Austro-Hungarian authority, Kapidžić saw causes to that phenomenon in a strong imperialism of the Monarchy⁴⁶ which, by its occupational politics, exploited

⁴³ Kapidžić 1968, 236.

⁴⁴ The Corfu Declaration, on the other hand, also foresaw that the Serbian Government refused to recognise the status of the Yugoslav Committee as an equal participant. Pašić himself called the declaration a *manifestation act*. Petranović 1988, 24.

⁴⁵ Kapidžić 1968, 236.

⁴⁶ *Serbia was on the way of the aggressive Austro-Hungarian imperialism and it needed to be entirely subjected to the Austro-Hungarian interests. or Bosnia and Herzegovina needed to become the springboard of the Austro-Hungarian undertakings in the Balkans.* Kapidžić 1968, 200.

the local population⁴⁷ and disabled the functioning of the Assembly, preventing thus all political activity,⁴⁸ and which increased the already-existing social and economic gap between the population by marginalising the land issue. Opposite to that, the existence of national antagonisms towards the Monarchy *as an explicitly Catholic state*, especially by the strong Serbian element (unlike the majority Croat and Muslim element that had supported the Monarchy, which Kapidžić attempted to minorize), was completely neglected, which is also in accordance with the ideological postulates of the time in which this work was written.

While, on the one hand, in an attempt at majorizing the Yugoslav idea on unification, he especially emphasised how massive the movement was, as well as the intensity and support that came from wide social circles and almost all *national* groups (Serb, Muslim and Croatian element that had increasingly stopped supporting the Monarchy, as Kapidžić saw it),⁴⁹ he was minorizing the opponents

⁴⁷ *The regime reacted bloodily. (...) In fact, an entire people were put out of the law.* Kapidžić 1968, 202.

⁴⁸ *Devoted to the idea of the Monarchy and the concept of trialism, this man (Sarkotić) continued with the politics of persecution and termination of all political activity in Bosnia and Herzegovina or Dismissal of the Assembly finally removed the possibility of any kind of public political activity in the country.* As well as: *Not a single politics in Bosnia and Herzegovina is the best politics* – Kapidžić quotes Sarkotić's statement. Kapidžić 1968, 203, 205 and 213.

⁴⁹ It is noticeable that Kapidžić tried to present the Muslim population as cancelling support towards the Monarchy, stating that they were disappointed with the situation in the country: *It is obvious that the affair with the Metal Plant had caused a significant displeasure with people, especially in the wide Muslim circles, contributing further to the loss of trust to the already compromised reputation of the National Government.* According to Kapidžić, Franciscans also supported the Yugoslav idea: *Franciscans maintained a very close contact with dr. Korošec stated their support to the Yugoslav declaration, for convening the assembly, and took a sharp stance against the governmental measures in requisition and tobacco purchase. Korošec was successful in bringing the Catholic clergy with the Franciscans. (...) There was also some talk of Korošec coming into contact with the Sarajevo Jews and that some of them supported the Yugoslav idea.* Kapidžić 1968, 229, 230 and 281.

First, there was a statement of the Bosnian Croats against Stadler's statement published by the Hrvatski dnevnik papers on 26 November 1917. The announcement condemned Stadler's gesture, emphasising the idea of the national self-determination, as well as a decisive support to the May Declaration. It is characteristic that the people who had been most active exponents and associates of Stadler started abandoning his lines. Among them was Stadler's secretary, monsignor Karlo Cankar. Kapidžić 1968, 236. Kapidžić makes a distinction between the May and Corfu declarations, in the sense of the principles upon which the Yugoslav community was supposed to be organised. As the May Declaration foresaw the unification of peoples under the Habsburg dynasty, the Corfu Declaration emphasised that the future state be organised as a constitutional, democratic and parliamentary monarchy with the Serbian dynasty at the top. Upon observing this interpretation by Kapidžić, one gets the impression that it was an exceptionally massive and straightforward Yugoslav idea supported by almost all structures and layers.

Kapidžić's tendency to present disunity and dispersion of Croats in view of the position towards the Monarchy and to present their support to the Yugoslav idea as massive as possible, is also evident: (...) *it was clear that there were political disagreements in the basic understanding of the political development of Croats in BiH at the end of WWI.* Kapidžić 1968, 238.

of the idea, on the other. That is why Austro-Hungarian Monarchy was considered as the main opponent to this Yugoslav movement.⁵⁰ However, apart from this main opponent, the Triple Entente forces strongly resisted the idea of the unification of the Yugoslav peoples, resisting to topple the Habsburg monarchy down until the mid-1918, as well as Italy who aspired for the Adriatic coast (Trieste, Istria, Dalmatia), so the formation of such a state disturbed its plans.⁵¹

Economically, the act of unification meant an exit from the extremely difficult and unfavourable socio-economic situation of the Yugoslav peoples of Bosnia and Herzegovina under the Austro-Hungarian rule, since the occupational authority was not interested in solving their problems. By marginalising the land issue, the monarchy severely aggravated the position of the population. This imperialist power did not show enough interest to help and ease the position of the Yugoslav peoples even during WWI, hence they were on a verge of dying. Kapidžić emphasised the dissatisfaction of the people and stated:

*Dissatisfaction of the wide masses with the authority was already clear in mid-1916. Supplies went through the rationing offices and was very difficult. That was especially felt with the town population, especially Muslims. There was a general feeling of weariness. Registration of the war loan by the state was very difficult.*⁵²

According to Kapidžić, the Austro-Hungarian authority was objected because it did not efficiently respond even in such difficult times, since the population, influenced by many misuses related to food supplies, was left on its own.⁵³ That is why the Yugoslav peoples, could have economically observed the unification only as *liberation*.

⁵⁰ Sarkotić, as the bearer of the exclusive power in BiH, attempted to prevent the liberation and unification of the Yugoslav peoples, by applying trialism in order to solve the Yugoslav question in the Monarchy as Franz Ferdinand had envisioned. On another place, Kapidžić defined the Austro-Hungarian politics as “the politics of preventing the Yugoslav unification. Kapidžić 1968, 260-261.

⁵¹ By the 1915 London Agreement, the Triple Entente forces promised the following territories for the country’s participation in the war: a part of the Slavic territories, Istria, northern Dalmatia with Zadar and Šibenik, almost all islands, and a part of the Albanian territory with the Valona port. Matković 2003, 32.

⁵² Kapidžić 1968, 216.

⁵³ The authorities prescribed the minimum rations per capita, which was insufficient for nutrition, and the situation was such that not even the minimum was allocated. Several district representatives reported on the unreliable behaviour of the village elders during the requisition of wheat for the army. There were also reports on some clergymen becoming unreliable. On another place, Kapidžić said: The war exhaustion, miserable nutrition and increased displeasure towards the regime were evident signs of a difficult situation in the country. The Croatian group headed by the Franciscans was ardent to cooperate with Serbs. Kapidžić 1968, 216 and 217.

The political and legal context of the unification of the Yugoslav peoples to them also meant *liberation* from the *occupying* Austro-Hungarian Monarchy that was imbued with strong *imperialism*, as well as an opportunity to organise their “brotherly” state on the principle of the *people’s self-determination*. From the legal point of view, the Yugoslav peoples restored that lost right when *General Sarkotić transferred authority to the National Government, nominated by the National Council at the proposal of the Central Committee for Bosnia and Herzegovina, on 1 November*.⁵⁴ The very fact that General Sarkotić, as a representative of the Austro-Hungarian authority had transferred authority to the National Government was a legal confirmation of the legitimacy of the future Yugoslav state. The people of all provinces of future Yugoslavia had fought for that lost legitimacy, since they supported the National Government.

Conclusion

Although all contributions in this compilation of articles and discussions, and, especially, the contribution entitled *Austro-Hungarian Politics and the Yugoslav Question during World War I*, which was the subject of this historiographic analysis, were comprised on a vast number of archival materials in which Kapidžić had found a credible documentation for his analysis on the activity of the occupational Austro-Hungarian authority in Bosnia and Herzegovina, it is unquestionable that his interpretations were frequently abundant with overtly *subjective*, expressly *anti-occupational* attitudes towards the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. By defining the Austro-Hungarian authority as imperialist, occupational, exploiting the BiH society by its politics while, at the same time, disabling any political work in the country, postponing the solution to the land issue, causing thus a significant social gap, Kapidžić, it seems, is not convincing in certain places, since he tried to interpret the Austro-Hungarian politics and the manifestations of the Yugoslav idea in accordance with the postulates of the ruling ideology.

If I were to exempt the ideological colouration of his work, Kapidžić’s *book Bosnia and Herzegovina in the Austro-Hungarian period (Articles and Discussions)* is, unquestionably, a significant contribution to the BiH historiography of the Austro-Hungarian period, considering the vast archival material and numerous historical facts presented, and, thus, it is a valuable work cited today even by all who scientifically engage in research of this period of BiH history. On the other hand, this valuable book, apart from the fact that it thoroughly and critically reconstructs the main positions of the Austro-Hungarian politics in Bosnia and Herzegovina, also contains ideology of the time in which it was written, enabling thus an insight into the way of historiographical thinking and working in the era of the Yugoslav socialism.

⁵⁴ Kapidžić 1968, 258.

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