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# The Idea of a Greater Croatia and Genocide as an Instrument for its Realization<sup>[2]</sup>

**Summary:** The paper consists of two selected chapters from the author's monograph published under the title *Through Genocide to a Greater Croatia*. The text points to the development of the great state idea among the Croats, aimed at creating the ethnically pure and Catholic state of Croatia, which is followed from the middle of the 19th century to modern times. The genocide over the Serbian people perpetrated in the so-called "Independent State of Croatia" from 1941 to 1945 was also guided by that idea. The idea was continued during Tuđman's coming to power in 1990, and one of the first moves of the new government was to change Croatia's Constitution by turning the Serbs in Croatia as a constitutional nation into a national minority.

**Keywords:** Croatia, genocide over Serbs, continuity of the Greater Croatia state project.

Croatia was constantly spreading threatening rumors about Serbia's intention to create a greater Serbia and its aspirations to a greater Serbia hegemony. This was an enviable adjective mentioned in all anti-Serb speeches delivered before the Yugoslav and the international public. The intention of these attacks was, on the one hand, to present the Serbs and Serbia as an aggressor with great territorial aspirations, and on the other, to conceal their own aggressive and territorial appetite for the ethnic, state and historical territories which belonged to the others.

This tactic is well-known as a constant feature of the Croatian policy. Actually, Croatia inherited this political approach from the collapsed Austria-Hungary whose campaign of demonizing the Serbs and their efforts for liberation and unification of their people was becoming increasingly intensive with the increase of their own appetite for the Balkan territories and their promotion of the German policy of *Drang nach Osten*. According to this tactical approach, everything that was Serbian was, as a rule, proclaimed greater Serbian in order to nip in the bud all Serbian interests conflicting with

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[2] The Editorial Board of the journal *Napredak* publishes exceptionally this paper as a reprint, which has been done for the first time in this journal, having in mind the significance of this paper as well as the scientific oeuvre of Academic Vasilije Krestić. With the permission of the author, this text has been reprinted from the chapter *The Idea of A Greater Croatia and Genocide as An Instrument for Its Realization and Conclusion* from his book *Through Genocide to A Greater Croatia*. The citation style has been adjusted to the rules of the journal *Napredak*.

the Austrian ones. Following in the wake of the Austro-Hungarian anti-Serb policy in which they also participated, and as of the 1848 Revolution to this day have rather often been in its frontlines, the Croatian politicians with the greater Croatia ambitions in all historical periods arrogantly attacked the Serbian policy, always calling it greater Serbian. By attacking the Serbian and the greater Serbian idea as a rival to the Croatian and a greater Croatian idea, Croatian politicians did not only dream about a greater Croatia, but continuously and persistently worked towards its establishment, according to Machiavellian principle that ends justify the means, even genocide against the Serbs in view of their extermination.

Croatian territorial aspirations have a rather long history. Although rather small in numbers and in a small territory, the Croats have always fostered great imperial ambitions. The case in point are their various regional names, such as: "Alpine Croats" (for the Slovenians), "Orthodox Croats", and "united Croats" (for the Serbs), or "the flowers of the Croatian people" (for the Muslims), then "Turkish Croatia"; "Red Croatia", "White Croatia", "Carinthian Croatia", which were all the territories in Bosnia, Montenegro, Dalmatia and Slovenia. The Croats had fostered these names for centuries and instilled them into the conscience of the Croats, in order to develop in them the awareness of Croatia's greatness and the numerical strength of the Croats.

Although I. I. Tkalac already in 1866 warned that states cannot be established on the ground of "old papers and virtual: territorial claims", the

policy based on the Croatian state and historical right could only be greater Croatia oriented. Their almost paranoiac ambitions in this regard are best illustrated in the views expressed in the paper of the Party of Rights, *Hrvatska*, which in its article entitled "Which is the Right Croatian Policy and Who is Promoting it?" (*Koja je prava hrvatska politika i ko je zastupa?*) (No. 6,1871, No. 6) claims: "According to the Croatian state, historical and ethnic right, Croatian territories spread from Germany to Macedonia, from the Danube to the sea and also encompass the following provinces: Southern Styria, Carinthia, Kranjska, Gorizia, Istria, Croatia, Slavonia, Krajina, Dalmatia, Upper Albania, Montenegro, Herzegovina, Bosnia, Rascia, Serbia, which all have one name: the State of Croatia. Croatian territories encompass over 4000 square miles, with the population of up to eight million."

This view published in *Hrvatska* was not an isolated case, a statement made by an irresponsible journalist or politician, or the result of a cranky obsession, but a natural outcome of a deeply rooted and widespread conviction. Already in 1869, in his letter to Don Mihovil Pavlinović, Eugen Kvaternik wrote that if the policy of the Party of Rights were followed and the Croatian state and historical right were respected, then "not from the Drava River to the sea, but from Salzburg Tyrolean Alps to Kosovo and Albania, the flag of the pure and undivided Croatia would be flown!"<sup>[3]</sup>

Indoctrinated with the expansionist idea of greater Croatism and "armed" with the state and historical right, "the Croatian Academic Youth"

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[3] A letter to M. Pavlinović, by E. Kvaternik, Zagreb, June 22, 1869 (see Krestić, 1995, pp. 143-144).

supported by Ante Starčević, the father of the Fatherland, claimed not only Bosnia and Herzegovina, but also “the whole of Albania, Rascia, upper Moesia or today’s Serbia as Croatian lands!” (Archives of Serbia, Collection of donated and purchased documents, v. LX, No. 39; Šidak, 1972-1973, pp. 281-303). One of the supporters of this “specific aspect of Croatism” even wrote that “the Croatian King was invited to hoist the cross on St. Sofia Church in Constantinople” (Jagić, 1930, p. 324).

Đuro Deželić, a well-known Croatian writer and publicist and a follower of Starčević’s Party of Rights, in 1879 published his book *Croatian Ethnicity or the Soul of the Croatian People (Hrvatska narodnost iliti duša hrvatskog naroda)*, in which he claimed that since they were populated by the Croats, the Croatian territories encompassed the present Dalmatia with Boka Kotorska, Bosnia, i.e. Turkish Croatia and Rascia (the Novi Pazar Pashaluk), the present Herzegovina up to the source of the Neretva River, even in 1789, when Engel wrote his history of Turkey, was still called Turkish Dalmatia, and finally Montenegro with Northern Albania” (see Jagić, 1930, pp. 179-180).

In order to realize its aspiration to Bosnia and Herzegovina, on August 23, 1878, in its address to Franz Joseph, the Croatian Parliament expressed hope that Bosnia would be organized so as “to pave the way to its annexation to the Kingdom of Croatia, Slavonia and Dalmatia, in due time” (Ćorović, 1995, pp. 196-197). The aspiration to Bosnia and Herzegovina was so strong that Bishop Strossmayer, in his letter of 24 March 1878, said with indignation: “Our people are looking at Bosnia and Herzegovina like a vulture at its prey, unaware of the fact that all our internal logic is against it. How can we expect to be

liberated by those who simply cannot stand us, who are ready and eager to obliterate us and pronounce an anathema against us” (Ćorović, 1995, p. 197).

Almost twenty years before, when he was not yet disappointed in Austria and its policy towards the Croats, in his confidential memoranda to Prime Minister Count Rehberg, Strossmayer had tried to persuade the most responsible political factors in Vienna to get more actively involved in the solution of the Eastern question, suggesting that with the help of the Croats and the Military Border region (Vojna Krajina), Bosnia and Herzegovina would “fall into their hands like a ripe apple” (Krestić, 1976, p. 400). By offering Bosnia and Herzegovina to Austria, the Bishop wanted to tear those lands from the Turks, incorporate them into the Monarchy, and after gradually getting closer to them, to annex them to Croatia at the appropriate moment, if possible. Considering Bosnia as one of the Croatian lands, in 1879 Strossmayer wrote to Marijan Marković, Bishop of Banja Luka: “What is Bosnian is also Croatian, and what is Croatian is also Bosnian” (Mužić, 1969, p. 29).

The Program of the Party of Rights drafted at the beginning of November 1893 was the evidence of greater Croatia aspirations. The first article of this Program reads as follows: “*The Croatian state and natural right* should be implemented in *establishing the integral Kingdom of Croatia*, by uniting Croatia, Slavonia, Dalmatia, Rijeka, Međumurje, Bosnia, Herzegovina, Istria, Kranjska, Carinthia and Styria within the framework of the Habsburg Monarchy (Mazzura & Derenčin, 1894, p. 12, italics by V. K.)

When they speak about “establishing the integrated Kingdom of Croatia” and the intention

of annexing all the above-mentioned lands, this implies that in the past all these lands were united. Actually, in their endeavors to establish a greater Croatia, the members of the Party of Rights not only in their party program, but also through their other numerous texts, disseminated distorted historical facts. In fact, the Croats had three categories of territorial claims: “the real territories”, i.e. Croatia, Slavonia and the City of Rijeka with surroundings; the lands claimed on the ground of their virtual right: Međumurje, Dalmatia, the Kvarner islands, part of Istria and the north western parts of Bosnia, and the territories claimed on the ground of “the Croatian state and natural rights” which the supporters of the greater Croatia idea were eager to see incorporated into Croatia. Therefore, in its Program of 1893, the Party of Rights incorporated the whole of Bosnia, Styria, Carinthia, Kranjska and entire Bosnia and Herzegovina, although they had never been part of Croatia. Anyway, the project of establishing a Greater Croatia, which was to be realized state by stage, was completed in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and in the subsequent decades only amended and complemented with new suggested strategies and tactics to be implemented in the realization of the desired objective.

For each of their maniac territorial claims, e.g. Bosnia and Herzegovina, Vojvodina, parts of Slovenia and Montenegro, the Croats had numerous explanations grounded on historical, natural,

ethnic, geographical, economic, geopolitical and numerous other reasons. They had a very well-developed strategy and a perfectly functioning system in this regard. The Croats most violently attacked and condemned every side claiming the territories they coveted. In connection with their maniac greed for territories, it should be recalled that during the whole period, from the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century to this day, the Croats have permanently demonized the Serbs, as they are doing nowadays. According to the Croats, the Serbs were bandits and highwaymen and mean and cunning Byzantines. The Serbs were bandits from Šumadija and Chetniks, whereas they, Croats, were cultivated, great humanists and a peace-loving people who are on different grounds entitled to the territories claimed arbitrarily by the Serbs, because the Serbs are predatory, a factor of instability and a source of crisis and conflict and war mongers (see Südländ, 1990, p. 383; Pavelić, 1977, p. 486; Vučić, 1995, p. 165). In this way, thanks to their obstinacy which commands admiration, armed with perfectly developed tactics, unobstructed and very often supported by the short-sighted and irrational policy of Belgrade, they managed to elevate their greater Croatia claims to the level of justified and legitimate rights. Once they had achieved this objective, they did not conceal their readiness to realize their national and state claims at all costs, including the implementation of the most brutal force.<sup>[4]</sup>

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[4] As early as 1911, in Article 7 of the Croatian Youth Program (Mladohrvatski program), the young followers of Starčević emphasized: “Young Croatism as the most pronounced expression of radical propaganda for a greater Croatia will be disseminated in all Croatian regions listed in the political program and in all Croatian settlements, mostly by means of agitation from mouth to ear, through the press, the cultural institutions which will be founded, *and in extreme cases, by all other means*” (Italics by V. K.). (Demetrović et al, 1911, p. 4).

The Serbs did not manage to react appropriately to such practice. Imbued with the idea of Yugoslavism, sincere and credulous promoters of brotherhood and unity, they were always behind the time and appalled after having revealed the truth and childishly confused wondered why the Croats hated them and why they were doing so much evil to them.

*Hrvatski dnevnik* (*The Croatian Daily*), a paper published by the Croats in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which supported a racial approach to the solution of the territorial question, in a series of its articles discussed the issue of Bosnia and Herzegovina and to whom this territory actually belonged. In 1907, all these articles were collected and published in Sarajevo in a separate booklet entitled *Croatian Bosnia, We and "They" Over there* (*Hrvatska Bosna, mi I "on tamo"*). On the first pages of this book poisoned with Franko-Furtime ideas, we read: "A number of geographic, ethnographic and historical circumstances in Bosnia have defined its position with regard to the Monarchy, and even more its political Croatism which actually represents a cultural link between Europe and the East and between the Monarchy and Bosnia. In the most difficult historical circumstances, this link was perhaps looser, but it was never broken. This Bosnian Croatism is actually the ethnic link between the territory in which the Croatian tribe established its first, although a very small state, and the present Croatia. It is on the ground of state law that this link entitles our king to feel in Bosnia as its ruler, and not as its appointed governor. In a nutshell: only Croatism, be it Christian or Islamic, is called upon to bridge the gap between Europe and the Balkans.

This feeling is simmering and living in all of us and it clearly defines the task which we are to perform during our historical and cultural development, which is *in the first place the rapprochement of Bosnia to Croatia and paving to Bosnia the way to Monarchy and to the heart of Europe through Croatia, because it is its only way, no matter from where you start. In this way, Croatism will be resurrected, because blood is thicker than water!*

We are aware that we shall be faced with serious resistance in pursuing this objective, but *we have been fighting this battle already for a long time against the elements which tend to cross to the other side of the above-described gap, as if attracted by an invisible centrifugal force to get out of the state community with the Monarchy. Until yesterday, these elements demonstrated their loyalty and today those who used to call us their Croatian brothers are weaving the nets and throwing them across the Drina River, in their brotherly embrace eager to deprive us of our historical right and our ethnicity and sell us with pleasure to Belgrade – in Terazije Square! But we are still standing on this side of the crossroads, whereas they will remain on the other side!*" (all italics by V. K., see Demetrović et al, 1991, pp. 5-6).

This was the spirit which imbued the greater Croatia circles, which in their paper *Croatism* (*Hrvatstvo*) described the kind of relations they intended to establish in this phantasmagoric, big state, which for centuries had preoccupied their dreams. In the first issue of this paper, published in Zagreb on May 2, 1904, in its editorial entitled *Our Program*, we also read: "We shall fight for independence of the Catholic Church, for its rights and institutions, against all attacks, regardless of which side they come from. It will be our tasks to secure



58 | conditions for social recovery in Christ in all walks of life. By using all available constitutional means, we shall endeavor to secure the greatest possible organic extension of the Croatian state law... In Croatian lands, we shall recognize only one political people – *Croatian*, only one official state flag – *Croatian*, and only one official language – *Croatian*.” Vehemently attacking the Croats inclined to cooperation and harmony with the Serbs, the paper *Hrvatstvo* wrote: “Here is Christ and over there anti-Christ.”\_Here, a pure and glorious Croatism under the Croatian flag, and over there, irrational principles and a chaotic mixture of various flags. Here is our pride inherited from ancient Croats who did not allow a single foot of their territory to be taken away from them without bloodshed, and over there are those who are granting to others Croatian lands soaked with Croatian blood, as if they were old rags, and all this on behalf of harmony with those who do not care for harmony even with their own brother, unless he agrees to have his right hand cut off. What brotherhood!

On top of all this, you accuse us in your message that we will be responsible for the widening gap between the Serbs and the Croats!

Who has so far bridged the gap? You? When and how? You had enough time to do it! Where is the harmony you are talking about? The kind of harmony which some Serbs want to achieve with you every ox can achieve with the butcher, just by putting the head on the chopping block. We simply do not need this kind of harmony, because we would stop being what we are and what we want to be – Croats [...] In view of their [Serbian – V. K.] political usurpation, we simply cannot reach any agreement with them before they recognize as Croatian the

lands that belong to us on the ground of the Agreement (Nagodba) [of 1868 – V. K.], which provides for: one flat – Croatian, one language – Croatian, and *one political people – Croatian*.”

In addition to constantly laying their claims to Bosnia and Herzegovina, which was a bone of contention between the Serbs and the Croats, after the 1848/49 Revolution, and particularly after 1860, the Croats started fighting over Srem. Disregarding the fact that the majority population in Srem were Serbs and Orthodox, the Croats claimed this region on the ground of their historical right, with the objective of incorporating this region into a greater, ethnically pure and Catholic, united Croatia. Moreover, at that time, and even much later, Srem was also included in geographical maps of Croatia. In the controversy over where Srem belonged, actually two principles and two rights clashed: the Serbs insisted on a more up-to-date natural and ethnic right and claimed Srem on these grounds, whereas the argument of the Croats was based on their historical right from the feudal period and, as such, was rather obsolete at that moment. The approach of the Serbs and the Croats to these two mutually exclusive rights over Srem has actually determined their relations all this time up to the present day and, being a controversial problem, it will not be easily solved.

The Croats did not tone down their Greater Croatia aspirations after the establishment of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenians either. In new and, in many respects, different circumstances, the Greater Croatia idea was not only stealthily, but publicly demonstrated. Thus, Stjepan Radić, President of the Croatian Republican Peasants' Party, in his interview to London Daily News, published

on July 22, 1922, intentionally offered false data on Bačka, Baranja and Banat, claiming that “it was illogical and irrational to call these regions Vojvodina”, since “the Serbs with regard to the Croats represented a negligible minority there. (!) Therefore, these lands should not be governed as purely Serbian and a referendum should be held under the supervision of the League of Nations, with only one gesture: “Serbia – Belgrade or Croatia – Zagreb” (Kulundžić, 1989, p. 177).

A year later, in his letter of September 23, 1923, from London to the Presidency of the Croatian Republican Peasants’ Party, Radić requested new maps of Croatia and the Croats to be drawn which, in addition to Croatia, would include Slavonia, Dalmatia, Međumurje, Prekomurje “with Krka and Kastva”, and all former Austro-Hungarian lands (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bačka, Banat and Baranja), even Montenegro and Macedonia. In his instruction for such geographical presentation of Croatia, with explanations in French in English, because the maps were addressed to the foreign public, Radić particularly emphasized: “In the territory from Subotica to the Adriatic Sea, all districts with Croatian population of over 50% (in Bosnia, Catholic and Muslim Croats were treated as one group) should be marked with blue lines, and the Orthodox districts with the red ones.”<sup>[5]</sup>

Vlatko Maček, who inherited Stjepan Radić, continued to conduct very faithfully the greater Croatia policy of his predecessor. His objective was to create, under the leadership of the Croats, a state encompassing all Yugoslav lands which were for-

merly under Austro-Hungarian rule, and establish with Serbia some kind of an “association of interests”. Like Radić, he also supported the idea of a plebiscite in view of dividing Yugoslavia into two parts: up to the Drina River, and over the Drina River”. In his statement in 1935, he said that each of the following regions – Vojvodina, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Macedonia, even Dalmatia, through their deputies elected to the Constitutional Assembly, should be entitled to decide which side they would like to join. In other words, if Vojvodina wants to go with Serbia, let it go, and if it wants a special status in Serbia, let it be so. Also, *if Vojvodina wants to be out of Serbia, fine, and if it wants to b with Croatia, or separate, it is also fine [...]*. Jovan Jovanović Pižon, Head of the Peasants’ Party, left a testimony of Maček’s territorial claims on the grounds of his confidential talks with Prince Pavle Karađorđević. During his encounter with Maček, before the Cvetković-Maček Compromise, Prince Pavle asked him: “What is Croatia in your view?” Maček answered: “Croatia is the Primorska and Savska Banovinas”. During their second meeting, Maček claimed Dubrovnik and the Vrbaska Banovina, with 90% of Serbian population. During their third meeting, Maček’s appetite grew bigger. He claimed Srem to Ilok, Brčko with its surroundings, Bijeljina, Travnik, Fojnica and Herzegovina (*Notes by Jovan Jovanović Pižon of 26 March 1939, Archives of Yugoslavia. Collection of J. Jovanović*).

Croatia’s intention to expand over as big a territory as possible fully surfaced after the establishment of the Independent State of Croatia. Dis-

[5] The original letter is the property of Dr Aleksandar Vlaškalin. I take this opportunity to thank him for his kind permission to use it.

60 | satisfied with its size, through Doglavnik Slavko Kvaternik, they were trying to enlarge it. In his telegram of May 14, 1941, Siegfried Kasche, Head of the German Legation to Zagreb, informed his Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Kvaternik's aspiration "to expand the Croatian territory down to the Albanian border, including the towns of Priboj, Prijepolje and Pljevlja". Kasche supported this Croatian claim with the explanation that "Croatian troops were already stationed there". However, Italy was firmly against this. Count Ciano qualified Kvaternik's claim as "Croatian imperialism". In his *Diary* for June 30, 1941, he noted: "Now Pavelić would also want the Novi Pazar Sandžak. An irrational and groundless claim. I have a letter signed by the Duce, in which he rejected these aspirations" (Avramov, 1992, p. 265).

According to Erich Schmidt-Eenboom, author of the book on the German BND (*Bundesnachrichtendienst*), during Tito's absolute rule and unlimited power, Ivan Stevo Krajačić, one of his key politicians in Croatia, was the author of a draft plan on the establishment of a "sovereign Croatia", which would include Bosnia and Herzegovina, and actually spread over the territories within the boundaries of the former Independent State of Croatia in 1941 (Schmidt-Eenboom, 1955, p. 213; Avramov, 1997, pp. 193-194). This is one of numerous irrefutable proofs on the continuity of the greater Croatia aspirations, particularly with regard to Bosnia and Herzegovina. The political systems, legal frames, regimes, social orders and leaders had changed, but the Croatian politics remained unchanged, particularly with regard to Croatia's aspiration to expand its boundaries up to the Drina River.

In the past and to this day, the geopolitical position of Croatia has been one of the numerous

standing issues which jeopardized and disturbed the relations between the Croats and the Serbs. Speaking about the geopolitical position of Croatia, most of the Croatian politicians and geopoliticians, both in the past and nowadays, agree with Vjekoslav Klaić, a well-known Croatian historian, who said that Croatia "reminded of a widely split sausage". They also compared Croatia's position to a banana or the crescent. According to the general view of politically competent Croats on this issue, the state of such a shape was untenable and had no conditions for progress. Antun Radić explained that "the unification of Dalmatia with Croatia would look like the crust on a piece of bread, and Bosnia and Herzegovina would be the middle taken out of this Croatian bread [...] If we want to eat our bread, we also need the middle, which means that we need Herzeg-Bosnia" (Dom, 4 April 1901, No. 7, p. 16). For Antun's brother Stjepan, Bosnia was "the stomach of the rest of Croatia. If you deprive the man of his stomach, how can you expect him to live?" (Radić, Predavec, Novljanin, 1910, p. 146). According to Frano Supilo, "Croatia without Bosnia would always be a toy in the hands of the master of these now occupied regions, i.e. Bosnia and Herzegovina (Supilo, 1970, p. 179). Croatian politicians concluded that if Croatia wanted to secure a permanent economic and financial independence, it should expand its territories. *Hrvatski dnevnik* from 1940 discussed this issue in the following way: "Croatia will not be able to secure its permanent existence in its present shape, and therefore it needs some new regions for its own economic development" (*Hrvatski dnevnik*, 30 January 1940, No. 1346).

In the opinion of Dr. Ivan Pilar, one of the most eminent and respected Croatian geopoliticians,



known under the pen names Südland, Dr. Juričić and Florian Lichtträger, “from the geopolitical view, The Triune Monarchy without Bosnia and Herzegovina, had no future and was untenable in the geopolitical, economic and political sense (Pilar, 1918, p. 21). Also, according to Dr. Pilar, “Croatia and Slavonia, separated from Bosnia and Dalmatia, which are its integral parts, are reduced to a trunk unable for life” (Südland, 1990, p. 319). Dr. Pilar, the author of the book *The South Slavic Question (Južnoslovensko pitanje)*, reprinted four times in several decades, twice in Croatian and twice in German, in his brochure *The World War and the Croats and Their Attempted Option Even Before the End of the War (Svjetski rat i Hrvati. Pokus orientacije hrvatskog naroda još prije svršetka rata)*, published in 1915 and 1917, publicly announced what the strategic objectives of the Croats should be. In his brochure, Dr. Pilar, alias Dr. Juričić, said: “The Kingdom of Croatia, Slavonia and Dalmatia with its elongated and narrow territory of small depth, extending in two directions (in some places, Dalmatia is only several kilometers wide>), is not able to develop into any state or a political center, so that in this shape it has no future as a national and political body. In our opinion, the awareness of this fact was at the root of our eagerness to find a wider frame for our national development even before 1878, and in view of this objective, give our support to Illyrism and Yugoslavism. The Triune Kingdom secured the basic living conditions only after the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. In the territory of the Triune Kingdom, there is very little hope for the Croats to survive. Therefore, the emphasis is placed on Bosnia and Herzegovina as one of the most essential prerequisites for national survival

and political development of Croatian people. If they remain forced to live within the framework of the Triune Kingdom, the Croats will only vegetate. On the other hand, they will be able to live only if they obtain Bosnia and Herzegovina” (Südland, 1990, p. 65). According to Dr. Pilar, Croatia, Slavonia and Dalmatia are the shell, and Bosnia and Herzegovina the core of Croatia (Pilar, 1918, str 26).

Sticking to the idea of the shell and core, the Lexicographic Institute of the Federal People’s Republic of Yugoslavia, with Miroslav Krleža at its head, in the fourth volume of the *Encyclopedia of Yugoslavia (Enciklopedija Jugoslavije)*, issued in 1960, enclosed to the entry on Croatia, also published a map which included the whole of Bosnia and Herzegovina, up to the Drina River, as Croatian territories, without omitting a single foot of the land on its left bank. On the other hand, in the seventh volume of this *Encyclopedia*, published in 1968, Krleža did not apply the same method. The map enclosed to the item on Serbia has the boundary on the left bank of the Drina River, crossing over to the left bank only at some rare spots, Only the naïve and stupid, or maybe the corrupted Serbian members of the Editorial Board of the *Encyclopedia of Yugoslavia*, could overlook these shameless Croatian egomaniac claims to Bosnia and Herzegovina.

This approach of the Lexicographic Institute in the 1960s was nothing new and unusual with regard to the Croatian appetite for Bosnia and Herzegovina. Behind them, they had over a century-long tradition of such practice. As early as 1862, Josip Partaš, on the ground of Franjo Kružić’s draft, produced a map entitled “Historical map of the entire Kingdom of Croatia with the boundaries of the present regions and important old and new places”

The map was printed in famous Zagreb printing shop of Dragutin Albreht. The historical map of Croatia encompassed Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, the southwestern parts of Serbia and the southeastern parts of Slovenia.<sup>[6]</sup>

The ethnographic map which Nikola Zvonimir Bjelovučić included in his booklet published in Dubrovnik in 1934, under the title *The Ethnographic Boundaries of the Croats and Slovenians (Etnografske granice Hrvata i Slovenaca)*, also included the map compiled by the author in 1933, on *Ethnographic Boundaries of the Croats in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenians and in the Neighboring Countries (Etnografske granice Hrvata u Kraljevini SHS i okolnim zemljama)*. The significant territorial expansion of Croatia in this map more than obviously reminds of Pavelić's ISC. It included the whole of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Bay of Kotor all the territory down, somewhat south of Bar, parts of western Bačka, the region of Baya in Hungary (then and now), parts of Hungary southeast of Pech, a long belt along the Drava River, from St. Martin in the east down to Donja Lendava in the west, and the whole of Srem. Intentionally presented in general lines and imprecise, the map drawn by Bjelovučić actually reflected the greater Croatia territorial aspirations rather than the factual ethnic situation. This map encompassed all the lands that used to belong to Croatia on the ground of the Croatian state and historical right. For Bjelovučić, the ethnic composition of the population was only a pretext

for expressing indirectly the greater Croatia state and political objectives (Krestić, 1994, p. 286).

In view of the above summary presentation of this subject on which voluminous studies could be written, even the reader less familiar with the aspirations of the former generations would conclude without hesitation that the above-mentioned were the sources that inspired the present generation of Croatian politicians who defend the Croatian frontier on the Drina River, e.g. academician Dalibor Brozović and others, and who, like Franjo Tuđman, recalling the Croatian state and historical right, appropriate the Bay of Kotor and Bačka, but at the same time are eager to preserve the administrative boundaries between the former Yugoslav republic established by the AVNOJ.

The answer to the key question regarding the current relations between the Serbs and the Croats and the causes for the outbreak of the war between them can be found in today's program of the followers of the Party of Rights and the Furtims, who were the predecessors of Pavelić's Ustashi, and who recognized only one-Croatian flag to be flown in greater Croatia.

Dr. Ivan Pilar's ideas permeated the overall Croatian policy. They constitute the very foundation of the national ideology and the geostrategic objectives of the Croatian people. Therefore, it is not surprising that Petar Vučić, contemporary author of the book *Political Destiny of Croatia, Geopolitical and Geostrategic Properties of Cro-*

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[6] It should be noted that the map of greater Croatia with the boundaries extending from Kotor on the Adriatic Coast to Zemun at the confluence of the Danube and the Sava Rivers, was drawn at the First Croatian Catholic Congress, held in Zagreb in 1900. On that occasion, Croatian historians "used their very best efforts to prove that this was historically Croatian ethnic territory" (see Ekmečić, 1992, p. 98).

*atia (Politička sudbina Hrvatske. Geopolitičke i geostrateške karakteristike Hrvatske* (Zagreb, 1995), openly and without hesitation states that, after the capitulation of Italy in September 1943, and the abrogation of the Roman Accords, the ISC was territorially rounded up and that its geopolitical and geostrategic ideals had materialized with regard to its size, shape, position and all geopolitical and geostrategic properties. The only problem of this ideal Croatian state was “the presence of a large number of non-Croatian population” (Vučić, 1995, p. 221). In the Croatian Ustashi state, rounded up in 1943, the above-mentioned author emphasized: “Although in many respects only an unrealized dream, the ISC remains a permanent witness of our lofty aspirations to establish our own state and a proof of high morals of the Ustashi revolutionary movement, which, by supporting this (although only partly realized) state project, has become a true promoter of the Croatian historical and statehood ideals and ideology” (Vučić, 1995, p. 221). This way of thinking perfectly coincided with Dr. Tuđman’s statement that the Independent State of Croatia reflected “the historical and a thousand-year long aspiration of the Croatian people to obtain their own independent state”. The naïve and the ignorant ones were surprised and disturbed by this statement, in spite of the fact that it was fully in line with the century-long aspirations promoted throughout all Croatian political efforts.

Not long ago, a Catholic priest, in his sermon delivered in the Church of the Wounded Jesus, in the center of Zagreb, spoke about greater Croatia that included the whole of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the Drina River, which proves that this aspiration has always been the Croats’ ideal of state hood

and their lodestar. In his sermon, he called for the establishment of “a more beautiful, greater and happier Croatia”, with Banja Luka at its center, which was the wish of Poglavnik Ante Pavelić. Preacher Vjekoslav Lasić, a Dominican, expressed hope that the Poglavnik’s wish would one day come true, in view of “a rather strange shape of the present Croatia” (Pilić, 1997).

Petar Vučić and the Dominican priest Lasić were not isolated fanatics. They only expressed loudly the prevailing opinion in Croatia and the view on its future. Radomir Milišić followed in their wake. In his book *Creation of Croatia, an Analysis of National Strategy (Stvaranje Hrvatske, analiza nacionalne strategije)* (Zagreb, 1995), he said: “Since the destiny of Bosnia and Herzegovina, namely the destiny of the Croats in it is inseparable from Croatia and the Croats, Croatia and the Croats should use their very best efforts to make it as close to Croatia as possible (because the Croats are a sovereign people in Bosnia and Herzegovina and will be able to defend the status only with the help of the republic of Croatia), and Croatia will have to follow vigilantly the developments in this territory so vital for its interests. The territories which the Croats in Bosnia and Herzegovina defended and secured for themselves represent the very foundation of their sovereignty in this state and a proof that without the Croats Bosnia is not viable as a state” (see Milišić, 1995, p. 12).

These are only a few examples which prove greater Croatia territorial aspirations based on the Croatian state and historical right. However, all followers of the policy of Eugen Kvaternik and Ante Starčević, who hold power in Croatia today and whose programs, as I. I. Tkalac says, “are based on

old papers and virtual territorial claims”, have an insatiable appetite for territories. It is needless to waste words on proving that the Ustashi of Ante Pavelić based their entire policy on the Croatian state and historical right. Both aspects of their policy, the open and the secret one, based on the Croatian state and historical right, during the 1941-1945 war revealed to the appalled, abhorred and disgusted international public its criminal face and its bloodthirstiness, which was actually the logical outcome of a distorted and basically sick policy whose main objective was to develop pathological hatred for the Serbs in order to initiate the most horrible genocide ever remembered.

By obstinately claiming Bosnia and Herzegovina as an integral part of Croatia “in order to help it live and not vegetate”, according to Stjepan Radić, the Croats “were taught to believe that there was no free and united Croatia without Bosnia and Herzegovina” (Radić, 1971, p. 289). If the Croats fostered this idea when they were under the Austro-Hungarian rule and later when they joined Yugoslavia, then there is no reason to challenge Stjepan Radić’s statement. Moreover, it is more than evident that today this idea is even more widespread among the Croats. Actually, by creating ethnically cleansed Croatia, the Croats managed to get closer to the realization of their geostrategic objectives in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Without Serbs in Croatia, Slavonia and Dalmatia, without the internal factor of disturbance as they call them, the Croats will be able to invest more strength and will have to face fewer obstacles and problems in their efforts to swallow up Bosnia and Herzegovina, together with their Serbs and Muslims, from a more favorable geopolitical position. If the Serbs face this

situation unprepared, if they allow to be seduced and deceived by the idea of Illyrism, Yugoslavism, brotherhood and unity or togetherness, they will pay a very high price for their naivete, shortsightedness, superficiality, ignorance and stupidity, and will never again be able to recover, because the balance of power will shift to the benefit of the Croats. Like Croatia, Serbia will also have to follow closely the development in Bosnia and Herzegovina as a region of its vital interests. If Serbia does not give up quarreling with Bosnian Serbs over different ideological, political, party and personal issues, and if Serbia does not take into account its own global state interests, it will definitely lose this battle with the Croats, because there is no doubt that the Croats most eagerly strive to expand their state territory all the way to the Drina River and even all the way to Zemun, on the opposite side of Belgrade.

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In view of the above-said, it becomes evident that throughout their entire common history, to this day, the Croats and the Serbs could never live in peace and harmony. Their relations have always been seriously jeopardized by the Croatian policy based on the state and historical right and on the institution of the Croatian “political” (constitutional) people. History has shown that Croatian social and political forces which had the strength to reject the postulates of the outdated feudal society, including the historical and state right and the institution of the “political” people, could nevertheless reach agreement with the Serbs and cooperate with them, even avoid all otherwise inevitable controversies, the case in point being the joint activities of the

Croatian and Serbian politicians in the period of the Croatian-Serbian coalition between 1905 and 1918. Moreover, the Croatian social groups and political parties that had rejected the fiction that in the Croatian state territory there was only one, “political” Croatian people, had not only settled all the differences between them and the Serbs, but also conducted with them joint national and political activities, which culminated in the creation of their common state in 1918. On the other hand, some segments of the Croatian society and some political parties which steadily and rigidly defended the Croatian state and historical right and the Croatian “political” people as the only one living in the Croatian territory, and the idea that the Serbs were actually “Orthodox” Croats and, as such, only a part of the Croatian “political” people, were in constant conflict, almost at war with the Serbs, and were ready to implement even the most brutal means in the effort to make them adhere to their policy. Such were the followers of Ante Starčević and Eugen Kvaternik, the supporters of his Party of Rights, the Franco-Furtims of Josip Frank, the Ustashi of Ante Pavelić, the followers of Franjo Tuđman and this Croatian Democratic Community (HDZ) and other less known politicians in Croatia today.

It is totally inappropriate to pose the question about the reasons for the breakup of Yugoslavia and why the war between the Croats and the Serbs in Croatia took place on the Croatian soil and who is responsible for this war, when it is a well-known fact that within the framework of the Socialist Republic of Croatia, every day, every week and every year in the League of Communists of Croatia and under its auspices, the social and political forces supporting the Croatian state and historical right

were growing increasingly strong and turning this political institution into a stronghold of this idea. The stronger these forces, the weaker the links between the Croats and the Serbs became, until they finally broke up. From the statements of many Croatian politicians who appeared on the political scene after the defeat of communism, the Serbs in Croatia and the whole of Yugoslavia concluded that the evil was approaching that that the tragic events from distant and recent past would be repeated. Since the history of the Serbs in Croatia was very little researched and wrongly interpreted and taught, which again is not accidental, very few, even among the most responsible ones, were able to explain the causes of the approaching evil. Everything culminated the day when, at its session of December 22, 1990, the Croatian Parliament (Sabor) abolished the status of a constitutional people to the Serbs and transformed them into a national minority. At that moment, it became clear that the new government in Croatia, with Franjo Tuđman at its head, was going to follow in the wake of Poglavnik Ante Pavelić and all his predecessors, promoters of the Croatian state and historical right in their policy, and who established the institution of the “political” people in the effort to create, on the basis of forged documents, ethnically pure, Catholic, united Croatia as the embodiment of their centuries-long dream.

In Croatia, the opinion prevailed and still prevails that the “Croatian thought” could be translated into reality only after the extermination of the Serbs. Thus, the Serbs became the target of Croatian extremists and promoters of the idea of Croatia exclusivists coming from different social strata. These attacks, with shorter or longer interruptions, depending on current circumstances,



have been going on for over a century to this day, always with the same objective in mind: creation of a greater, ethnically pure, Catholic and united independent state of Croatia. This is the only explanation for anti-Serb demonstrations in Zagreb in 1895, 1899 and 1902, the 1908/1909 anti-Serb trial for high treason, the 1914/1915 pogroms of the Serbs, and the genocide against the Serbs in 1941-1945. This is also the only explanation for the secession of Croatia and the destruction of Yugoslavia in 1991, and the intention of Croatia to defend its territory at the Drina River. By reducing the Serbs, a constitutional people according to the Croatian Constitution until December 1990, to the status of a national minority, was nothing but the continuation of the policy based on the idea of one “political” Croatian people. As a result of this policy, the Cyrillic alphabet was abolished in Croatia and the adjective “Serbian” was deleted from the name of the official language in Croatia, which is now only Croatian and no longer Croatian or Serbian. For the same reason, the Yugoslav Academy of Sciences and Arts became the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts. Mass demolition and burning of Serbian houses, arbitrariness in issuing or denying the certificate of citizenship to the Serbs, requests for their signing the declaration of loyalty, eviction from their homes, dismissal from job, murders and forcible displacement in the service of the “Croatian thought”, all these acts of violence stem from the principle of Croatia’s state and historical right.

All Serbs, not only those from the territory of the former Socialist Republic of Croatia, must once and for all understand and remember where the causes hide of all the evils affecting them in

their “co-habitation” with the Croats. If they do not understand and remember it, there is an objective danger that, incautiously and irresponsibly, they will once again enter a new joint community with the Croats. Before the Croats free themselves from the remains of the feudal society, before they once and for all free themselves from the policy based on the Croatian state and historical right, before they accept modern civilian and political principles, they will not be a suitable partner for “co-habitation” with any nation. That has already been experienced by the Hungarians, Italians and Serbs. It will certainly be experienced by the Muslims soon, regardless of the fact that in the last century, the father of the homeland, A. Starčević, said that they were the “flowers of the Croatian people”. The Croats should be enabled to realize their aspirations and all their ambitions in their own ethnic territory, without causing harm to anyone. When and if that ever happens, which will be judged by the future generations, it will be possible to think about the new “co-habitation” with that people.

The aim of this paper is to show in main points the key moments that contributed to the creation of genocide ideas and to draw attention to their various manifestations. Such knowledge – no matter how significant for the scholarly elaboration of the past – can also be useful in recognizing today’s genocide thoughts and their potential manifestations in the future.

At the end of this contribution to the history of the genocide idea against the Serbs in Croatia, I would like to emphasize that it is not simple and easy to write about this topic. Created in distant past, developed for centuries, to this day, the genocide idea may be followed only by comparative re-

search into the history of the Croats and the Serbs in Croatia. Since that comparative research is at its very beginning, the difficulties are huge and

multiple. It may also be the reason why this paper is of pioneer character and, as such, is probably not faultless.

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