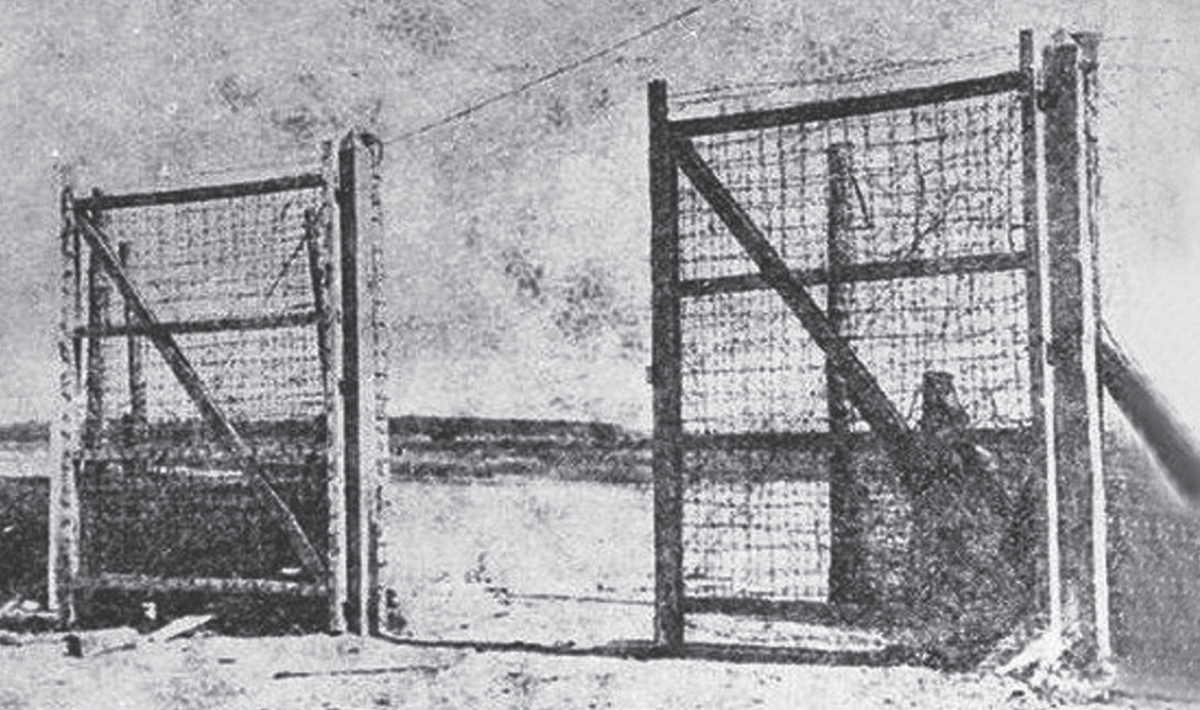


# The Death Camps of Croatia

Visions and Revisions, 1941–1945



RAPHAEL ISRAELI

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**RAPHAEL ISRAELI**

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To the Victims of the Ustasha Fascists:  
Serbs, Jews, and Gypsies,  
Whose Memory Had Been Suppressed,  
But Has Now Seen the Light of Day



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# Foreword

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## How Was This Book Born?

Less than a decade ago, the very names of Jadovno and Jasenovac were foreign to me. I have visited Serbia a number of times, in the decade that followed the Dayton settlement that put an end to the Bosnia War of 1992–95, and participated in several conferences convened by the Serbian Academy of Science, which hammered out the security and political ramifications of those arrangements, especially the ensuing Kosovo War and the rising Islamic radicalism that was being fomented by foreign Wahhabi preachers and by jihadists who had come from as far as Iran, Chechnya, Afghanistan, and Dagestan, to stir up more trouble in the Balkans. During those conferences, the participants made field trips to Vojvodina and Kosovo, to learn and experience something of the uneasy coexistence between the Serb majority and its Croatian, Albanian/Muslim, Hungarian, and other minorities.

A follow-up conference, which was convened by the President of Republika Srpska—who also happened to be an academician—in his capital, Banja Luka, in 2005, to deal with Jewish communities in Yugoslavia in history, also comprised a field trip to “Jasenovac,” where we spent half a day walking through the vast camp, on the banks of the Sava River. Large posters alerted the scarce visitors about the disturbing numbers of Serbs, Jews, and Gypsies who were purportedly systematically murdered during the four years of its operation that allegedly rendered it the third in size in Nazi-occupied Europe (after Auschwitz and Treblinka), in terms of its sinister “productivity” in human corpses.

No doubt, the advertised numbers seemed both well-founded and grossly inflated at the same time, but you cannot tell a Serb or a Jew or a Gypsy, whose family had been picked up by the Ustasha state, incarcerated in the camp, and never seen again, while scenes of floating corpses on the Sava had become familiar to anyone in the neighborhood who wished to know, that the reported numbers were

exaggerated, or were abused in the propaganda war between Serbs and Croats, which persists to this day. That enmity has been kindling more flames in the ever-growing hatred between the two Slavic nationalities, which has certainly been at the base of the savagery that characterized the Bosnia war in the 1990s, and is still spectacularly deepening the divide between these two ethnic groups, who had shared the same state, nationality, identity, and language until the death of Tito, the Croat, who had ruled from Belgrade until 1980.

For the Serbs, the most vivid memories are those voiced by the Croat-Ustasha regime, which had announced its intention to render Croatia and its subordinate territories *Serben und Juden frei*. That meant persecution, oppression, expulsion, and outright extermination. That policy was relentlessly implemented during the four years of their ruthless rule, under the Nazi wings, no matter what the exact numbers of their victims were, mainly in the camps of Jadovno and Jasenovac, which had been built for that purpose and in reality served it, precisely like their many counterparts throughout Germany and Eastern Europe. For the Croats, while there is no denial of the horrors perpetrated by the Ustasha or of the slogan they had floated to the effect that the Serbs should be one-third expelled, one-third exterminated, and one-third converted (into Catholicism, which was coterminous with ethnic Croat nationalism), they blame the pro-Nazi regime. They claim it did not represent the Croats, exactly as the Austrians today claim that they were themselves Hitler's victims after the *Anschluss*, and they should not be treated today as his collaborators, or as the Norwegians, who have taken on the image of the most liberal regime in Europe after they had accepted with almost quietist equanimity their pro-Nazi Quisling regime during the war.

The unbridgeable hostility between Croats and Serbs, which is today detectable in all international fora, even those regarding the Shoah, which should be neutral grounds for all, has been anchored in those unforgettable events, even though their deeper roots can be sought in the earlier competition between the two groups since medieval times. Add to that the mutual hatred between, on the one hand, those two Slavic groups, who came to claim a specificity of their respective languages, literature, and culture (Serbian and Croatian) in a land that only three decades ago was boasting Serbo-Croat as their common national tongue, and on the other hand, the Bosnian Muslims who are despised by all the others, and you have a recipe for permanent friction, hostility, suspicion, competition, and Schadenfreude, between all

three major components of modern Yugoslavia. Anyone who circulates freely between all three, has dear friends in all of them, and attempts to collect factual and objective data in all of them, will always be accused of having missed a “critical datum” here, or having been “swept away by emotional arguments” there, or having been handed “inaccurate data by a scheming party” here and there, or having interpreted in a “biased fashion” “facts and events which are otherwise known to all.”

Any historian who has worked on primary sources has encountered the criticism of having been “selective,” or having failed to tell the entire truth, or of having misinterpreted this or that fact. Worse, many “new historians” have substituted their “narratives” to the “historical truth,” if there is one. Since the historian is not an inanimate object, but embarks on his history writing while carrying on his back his educational, cultural, ethnic, religious, national, and ideological luggage, it is probable that he or she cannot claim to be completely detached from his background. Thus, rather than pretending to be what he or she cannot be, swearing by the “objective truth” and the “strict fact,” it would be much more honest and truthful to admit to one’s biases, but at the same time to attempt to be fair in presenting facts and events on all sides, and judge them in a balanced and measured way, taking into consideration the context, the atmosphere, and the constraints in which decisions were taken and policy was implemented. One must recognize that one can clearly carry out the same evil policy with satanic zeal or with human clemency. Conversely, one can very well overstep the borders toward a human and liberal policy, to include within it people who are not strictly entitled to it or can disrupt or procrastinate on applying it to those for whom it was devised.

While hearing scholars, journalists, and politicians on all sides present their respective cases, listening to common people with whom I have conversed or whom I have interviewed, reading books and documents presented to me or that I sought and searched for, or on field visits where the sounds of dreary silence were more deafening and frightening than the cries of tortured victims, or on occasional conversations or exchanged emails, I came to the mixed conclusion that the horrors of Jadovno and Jasenovac have to be reported to the public in some nonpartisan way, beyond the partisan thousands of books and articles churned out by both parties in their propaganda wars, admittedly side by side with some fine scholarly production; but, at the same time, the only way to keep my sanity, my access to my sources, my close ties to my friends, and a reasonable timetable for

completing this job, was to try to remain emotionally uninvolved to the extent possible. Since I have no axe to grind, except for my deep sympathy for all the victims of that insanity, my commitment to my profession, and my added sentimental closeness to the tens of thousands of Jews who perished there as part of the all-European Shoah, I trust that I can maintain this approach of impartiality all throughout this endeavor, save for my partiality and commitment to truth and fact.

Except for the survivors and the victims, there are no pure saints, and except for the evil perpetrators there are no complete villains in this story, for abuses as well as supreme acts of human decency always occur in wars, side by side with excesses beyond what necessity or war constraints would dictate. The question is always to distinguish between what individuals did and the preponderant mood that guided the public, in general, while those acts of horror or of generosity were being done. For example, if we learn that while the Ustasha ruled ruthlessly “greater Croatia,” most of the population opposed it, then we might desist from linking automatically between Ustasha and Croat; conversely, if we have proof that some Serbs themselves collaborated with the Nazis and perpetrated horrific massacres against their opponents and Jews, then their attempts to project an image of innocent victims of the war might be blunted; or, if we can show that those who complain about being persecuted and wronged by others have themselves acted in kind with their rivals, then we might balance our views and stereotypes on the side of the “good guys” and on the other of the “bad guys.” Since we know today that the most oppressive regimes, such as Communism, Libya, Syria, Yemen, Imperial Iran, and others could be brought to their end by public resistance and rebellion, we are then likely to be less tolerant to those who disagreed with their regimes but accepted in silence their rule. In any case, this volume is not about judging one side against the other or pronouncing a verdict condemning the one and acquitting the other. It is about the unquestioned evil they both caused, or were made to cause, to the Jewish minority in their midst, in particular, and to others, in general. It is a fact that Serbs, Muslims, and Croats continue to dominate the ex-Yugoslavian scene, which has been their arena of battle for the past centuries, while the flourishing Jewish minority culture in that area has all but come to a historical standstill and almost totally vanished.

When I thought I saw it all on the Serbian side, I experienced an awakening on the Croatian side, when I repeatedly visited the Jewish communities of Zagreb, where I discovered that there were two of

them, and met with Croatian scholars (Jews and non-Jews), young and veterans of the War, officials and common people, and spent time in the two camps of Jadovno and Jasenovac, as I became aware that two of the latter existed. Two Jasenovacs also meant two different holocaust narratives. The rifts, suspicions, and hostility between Croats and Serbs, internal and external, are so deep as to dwarf the controversies about the numbers of victims, for much more fundamental and qualitative issues than numbers and quantities are at stake. I learned that what I had seen as the “Jasenovac Camp,” was only that part across the Sava, in Bosnian territory today, which Serbs cultivate as “their” Jasenovac, where they can exhibit the horrors of the war as they see them, as opposed to the Jasenovac Memorial on the Croatian side where one learns about a different, more diminished narrative, and a varying intensity of the horrors perpetrated there. On the Jewish side, one community, the Zagreb Jewish Community, which claims to represent the majority of the Jews and has actual possession of the remaining Jewish assets, stands aside and seems to engage in a bitter organizational battle for its exclusivity in speaking for all Jews; while their rival community, though representing the minority of the members, seems to teem with Jewish, Zionist, and pro-Israeli activity of all sorts, to merge its activities with those of the Israel-Croatia Association and to toe the official national line.

As against the low profile adopted by the first group, to the extent that in all my previous visits I had only become aware of the other community, most of my contacts had developed over the years with the large variety of scholars, journalists, and former Israelis who congregate around the smaller community, though it has no formal offices of its own. The two communities, which total two thousand souls (compared to the prewar ten thousand) are not on speaking terms, are very stingy on compliments toward each other, and have developed a different way of thinking since they split in 2006. While the first is very critical of the new Croatia, of the Jasenovac Memorial which to their mind tries to minimize the *Shoah*, and almost hurl accusations of guilt against their rivals, the other shows more moderation with the numbers of victims and joins the harsh criticism of the Serbs who are blamed for inflating the numbers of the Jasenovac mass murder. Strange coalitions of bedfellows are emerging within the community: On the one hand, Jews who hate their fellow Jews and despise their Croat countrymen for attempting to whitewash the Shoah and make it more palatable and more forgettable; on the other hand, devoted

Jews and Zionists who are also patriotic Croats and who fight for their country's war narrative. The impression is that each side pursues vehemently its own "justice" and cares less about objective analyses and hard data. The second community usually upholds the figures of a hundred thousand victims in Jasenovac, Serbs, Jews and Gypsies all included, predicated its data on verified names that were painfully collected, identified, and registered, while the skeptics point out that the lack of evidence is not evidence of lack. Yes, countless thousands have left no traces in their mass tombs and deep pits, but that does not mean that they were not murdered.

The controversy of numbers which will persist for ever,<sup>1</sup> despite the sober numbers advanced by some historians,<sup>2</sup> as will the relative assessments on the two sides of the divide relating to the intensity and relentlessness of the horrors of the Ustasha on the one hand,<sup>3</sup> the contributing mythological motivation of the Serbs to annihilate the Croats on the other,<sup>4</sup> and the unexpectedly growing literature on the Croats who came to the rescue of the Jews in the Ustasha state in the midst of those dark days.<sup>5</sup> However one twists the data, it is evident that while the Ustasha did commit genocide (of Serbs, Jews, Gypsies, and others), even if we accept the minimal numbers admitted by the Croats and their Jasenovac Memorial, no such a blame could be hurled against the Serbs during World War II, either because they were themselves occupied by the Germans or because the project of genocide against Croats and Muslims had never been within their purview at that time. To project the savageries of the Bosnia War of the 1990s, in which all parties have participated, on the "national character" of the Serbs, is not a serious proposition, even when wrapped in scholarly dissertations and spelled out in fancy social science terminology. Serbs may or may not have been prone to genocide, just as the Hungarians, Lithuanians, Ukrainians, Poles, and others, but in World War II they did not commit one, though Nedic and his acolytes, in a different fashion than the Pavelic Ustasha followers, collaborated with the Nazis in carrying out their "final solution" for the Jews.

The adamant and unconscionable hurling of numbers, exaggerated upward or downward, has nevertheless produced over the years a process of leveling off, by force of erosion or under the hammer of perseverance by serious scholars on both sides. Serbs no longer buy that inflated number of eight hundred thousand murdered Serbs, which is still proclaimed in the Bosnian Jasenovac, nor do they buy the

exceedingly low number of just over eighty thousand, including Jews and Gypsies, which has been advertised in a two-thousand-page directory of names of all victims to all visitors of the Croatian Jasenovac. Between these two extremes one finds various foundations, memorials, archives, and government and scholarly publications that under the impact of conferences, publications, and joint or separate research, have considerably narrowed the gap between the two, to the order of a few hundreds of thousands for the Serbs, and around one hundred thousand for the Croats. Both are a far cry from what politicians (like the Croat Tudjman, who declared that “only forty thousand Serbs” were killed) or descendants of the murdered (five hundred thousand or more victims) claim. At any rate, a genocide there was, not because of the numbers, but because it was perpetrated by the Ustasha as part of their ideology to annihilate the Serbs or parts thereof.

To try to penetrate the minds of the main actors in this sad narrative, and especially to overcome the language boundaries which have considerably limited my direct access to some of the sources, I had to rely on two dear friends on both sides of the divide: Nada Lubic, a scholar and public activist from Belgrade, and Boris Havel, a scholar and diplomat from Zagreb, who have devotedly spent endless hours to introduce me into the materials, to coach me into their archives, to facilitate my stay in their respective countries, and to translate for me otherwise inaccessible materials. Being loyal nationals of their respective parties, they tried undoubtedly to impact me with their biases and to emphasize their points of view, but I must also stress with admiration their scholarly commitment to the truth and their consistent and conscious efforts to remain neutral and open-minded to counterarguments all along. Both of them will certainly, and understandably, lament my “lack of comprehension,” or my “selling off” to their rivals’ ideas, or my “betrayal” of our long-lasting and deep-rooted friendship and whatnot. But as I shoulder alone the responsibility for any errors of fact, comprehension, and interpretation, and as I have no axe to grind, I know that I did the best I could to sort things out and fulfill my duty as a chronicler, and to interpret in order to share with the new generations that dark episode in the history of Yugoslavia, the Jewish people, Europe, and the world, which has for too long been obscured by political controversy.

Raphael Israeli,  
Jerusalem, Winter 2011–2012





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# Introduction

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## Yugoslavia on the Eve of Nazi Occupation

The Ottoman state, which had reached Vienna at the pinnacle of its expansion in the sixteenth century, in its second quest to Islamize Europe, after the first attempt had ended in failure in the Iberian Peninsula around the same time, was multi-ethnic and multi-religious. Under its Muslim dominance, Christians, Jews, and others lived in a state of *dhimma* for many centuries, ostensibly as relatively free to exercise their respective faiths, but in fact they were often displaced, uprooted, lured, and at times forced to Islamize. For this coexistence was not born out of a modern concept of tolerance of the other on the basis of acceptance of differences and equality to all, and therefore a right of free choice, but on a sense of superiority which when it tolerated others, that was in spite of their inherent inferiority. Therefore, even though Muslim Turks may have temporarily constituted the minority of the population in some areas of the Empire, they reigned supreme by virtue of their Muslim master status, while the various Christian groups (and Jews for that matter) were relegated to the status of “protected people” (*dhimmis*). Christians and others who had integrated into the Ottoman system, by embracing Islam, speaking Turkish, and going into the government service, soon became part and parcel of the Ottoman culture, even when they kept their attachment to their ethnic origin and to their mother tongue. The Bosnians were a case in point; many of them felt privileged to go into the *devsirme* system of enrolling their boys to the prestigious Janissary Corps, and in the course of time, they were Islamized, though they preserved their Slavic roots and language.<sup>6</sup>

The Balkans were conquered by the Ottomans from the middle of the fifteenth century on. Serbia fell to the Muslim conquerors in 1459, and four years later Bosnia and Herzegovina succumbed. Caught between the economic interest of milking the tax-paying *dhimmis* by

extracting from them the *jizya* poll tax, which necessitated maintaining the conquered population in place instead of expelling it or converting it by force, and the military and security needs that required the Muslim population be numerous enough to ensure the loyalty to the Empire, the Ottomans tended to implement the latter choice in the Balkans. They adopted the policy of deporting part of the native populations and settling their own people, or other conquered people in their stead, thus ensuring that no local minority should envisage any insurgency among a Muslim population. In Bosnia, the process of Islamization was reinforced by the turncoats who flocked to Islam and became the worst oppressors of their former coreligionists. So much so, that the Bosnians were notorious for their role in the Ottoman administration, the military, and especially the Janissaries. Much of the anti-Christian zeal, which burst in Bosnia in the twentieth century against Serbs and Croats alike, can be traced back to those early times. As late as 1875, way after the introduction of the modernizing *tanzimat* reforms into the Ottoman system, which were supposed to redress the situation of the non-Muslims throughout the Empire, the British Ambassador in Istanbul reported that the Ottoman authorities in Bosnia recognized the impossibility to administer justice in equality between the Muslims and the Christians, inasmuch as the ruling Muslim courts accepted no written or oral evidence from Christians. One 1876 report from Bosna-Serai (Sarajevo) by the British Consul in town, tells the whole story:

About a month ago, an Austrian subject named Jean Udilak, was attacked and robbed between Sarajevo and Visoka by nine Bashibazouks. The act was witnessed by a respectable Mussulman of this time named Nouri Aga Varinika, and he was called as a witness when the affair was brought before the Sarajevo Tribunal. His testimony was in favor of the Austrian, and the next day he was sent for by the Vice-President and one of the members of the Court and threatened with imprisonment for daring to testify against his coreligionists.<sup>7</sup>

As British Consul Majer tells us, Muslims, Christians, and Jews, for that matter, could keep to themselves in their own communities, with their lifestyles, rituals, and festivals running without hindrance, except in case of intermarriage. For here, the only allowed combination was Muslim men taking in Christian (or Jewish) wives, an act that consecrated their joint offspring as full-right Muslims. The result was that while non-Muslim culture merged into the predominant Islam, there

was also an outside input into the Muslim civilization, with material culture (food, dress, habits, language) growing to become common to all. All this was acceptable to the Ottoman authorities who were reluctant to interfere, but as soon as the *dhimmis* became wealthy and were conspicuous in their dress and demeanor, it was considered a provocation to the Muslim population and dealt with accordingly. Christians who wanted to improve their lot in Bosnia and Albania could always do so through conversion to Islam or seeking the protection of their Muslim family members.<sup>8</sup>

Toward the end of the Ottoman rule, as economic problems arose and the state was no longer able to enforce law and order in the face of the nationalist awakening in the various provinces of the Empire, local rule grew more despotic in an attempt to hold on to the territories that were slipping out of the Porte's grip. The notions of equality coming from liberal Europe, which made the maintenance of legal and religious inequities untenable, were conjugated into national terms in the Balkans, and spelled out independence from the Ottoman yoke, since the idea of ruling an Empire held together by Islam was no longer operative. It was, ironically, the Ottoman attempts at modernity, opening up the system and addressing individuals instead of traditional communities, which brought to its downfall and opened the new vistas of nationalism and independence in the Balkans as elsewhere, a situation not unlike Eastern Europe after the Gorbachev Perestroika in the late 1980s and early 1990s. But in view of the Greek and Bulgarian plans for a Balkan Federation under their aegis, to take over from the Ottomans,<sup>9</sup> the gradual and parallel dreams to realize a Greater Serbia, a Greater Croatia, and a Greater Albania, and the tax repression imposed on all of them by the Bosnian Muslims on behalf of the dwindling imperial authorities, the Serbs rose up in arms (1875), and many of them ran into hiding, leaving behind, to the mercy of the Muslims, children, the old, and women, something reminiscent of the horrors of the Bosnian War and then the Kosovo War more than one century later. Preytor and Banja Luka were the most harmed by the insurgents when Serb churches and homes were burned.<sup>10</sup>

According to reports from the time of the rebellion, the Bosnian Muslims, descendants of converted Slavs who had become the landowners and acceded to the status of aristocracy by virtue of their conversion, now practiced their faith fanatically and ruthlessly toward their Orthodox compatriots, who would rather die in battle than submit to the tax exactions. What made things worse, again like in

the recent events in Bosnia, was that the Catholics (later identified as Croats) allied to the Muslims against the Orthodox Serbs, as was to occur again during World War II when the greater combined state of Croatia and Bosnia was set up under the Ustasha. An eyewitness of the time reports:

United under oppression, it was natural that the Serbs should respond by rebellion. But in the entire northern part of Bosnia and Turkish Croatia, . . . the antagonism between the two [Catholic and Orthodox] denominations is vast enough for us to have eye-witnessed Catholics marching on the heels of the Turks against Greek insurgents. . . . By an inexplicable aberration, the priests of the two denominations entertain hatred [toward each other] and we could say without exaggerating that, if given the choice the Catholics would rather be dominated by the Turks [Muslims] than by the Orthodox Serbs.<sup>11</sup>

That reporter had concluded that the Muslims of Bosnia maintained their loyalty to the Ottomans, and that there was no chance of a fusion between the populations, in view of the fact that those Serbs (or Croats) whose ancestors had embraced Islam as a political expediency, were now too imbued with it and too captured by the teachings of their Holy Book to relent from their intense hatred, which had germinated in their bodies and taken them over completely.<sup>12</sup> But this was to be only a foretaste of things to come, as henceforth the politics of Yugoslavia would be dominated by the alliance of two of its major religious groups, and later ethno-national communities, against the third. After the Berlin Congress (1878) and the occupation of Bosnia by the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the Serbs allied with the Muslims against the occupiers, who were supported by the Catholics (Croats) in the province. The Hungarian governor of the province tried valiantly to create a new Bosnian identity merging together its three principal communities, but he failed.<sup>13</sup>

The annexation of Bosnia by the occupiers in 1908 created a new alliance: the Serbs of Bosnia, who wished their merger with Serbia (not for the last time), were pitted against the Croat-Muslim coalition who would rather reconcile to their occupation than allow the Serbs to implement their dream. As a result, repression of the Serbs in Bosnia, coupled with the expulsion of Serbs from Kosovo, brought to a record level the bitterness of the occupied Serbs against their oppressors. Sukrija Kurtovic, a Bosnian Muslim, sought the differentiation between ethno-nationality and religion, and pleaded for

the unity of the Bosnians with the Serbs in one single national group by reason of their common Serbian roots, arguing that Islam was a common religion of the Bosnians and the Turks, but that in itself did not make them share any national common ground.<sup>14</sup> The idea of Yugoslavism, a larger entity where all the ethnic and religious groups could find their common identity, came to the fore after the Balkan wars and precipitated World War I following the Sarajevo murder of the heir to the Austro-Hungarian throne in 1914. That war reinforced the Croat-Muslim alliance in Bosnia, which swore to expel the Serbs from Bosnia altogether, and acted upon its vow by perpetrating large-scale massacres of the Serbs, thus demonstrating the vanity of an all-Yugoslavian identity.<sup>15</sup>

A Yugoslavian state was created in 1918 nevertheless, which once again attempted to fuse its components in the ethnic and linguistic domains and leave, as befits a modern European state, the question of religion to the realm of each individual. However, while the Serbs and the Croats of Bosnia could look up to Belgrade and Zagreb, respectively, the Muslims were left to vacillate between their Muslim, Ottoman, local, and Slavic roots. At first they allied with the stronger Serbs and turned their eyes on Belgrade where they ensured for themselves some privileges; but wary of the competition between the Croats, who championed their particularistic nationalism, and the Serbs, who regarded themselves as the guardians and sponsors of Yugoslavian unity, they focused more and more on their local and religious identity in the form of a Muslim Party (JMO), while the Serbs and the Croats continued to claim that the Muslims of Bosnia were of their respective origins.<sup>16</sup>

The Yugoslavian kingdom, which was formed in 1918, integrated into a single state embracing the southern Slavic nations of Croatia, Slovenia, Serbia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro, and Macedonia. Each one of these nations dwelling in the Balkans, and being the protégé of conflicting interests and competing religious denominations, triggered more than once wide-ranging confrontations all over Europe, notably in Sarajevo in 1914, which launched the conflagration of the Great War in 1914 that caused the death of twenty million persons; deprived Europe of an entire generation of young lives of workers, intellectuals, artists, creative minds, and who knows who else; and instead paved the way for the larger and more cruel and destructive World War II, when frustrated madmen like Adolf Hitler and his ilk, who could not accept their country's and personal

humiliation, set the world on fire. But when the first Yugoslavian state was created in consequence of that war, *inter alia* on the ruins of the Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman sick and obsolete empires, it was the result of positive Western attitudes toward its component parts, which were to shift totally later on. A 1923 history of the Balkans, describes the situation thus:

In 1922 the new King, to the great satisfaction of his subjects, married, and at his wedding with a Roumanian princess, the Duke of York represented the British Royal family. Never have the ties between Great Britain and the Serbs been so close as since the [Great] War, when they fought side by side. Many Serbs found a refuge in England, many were educated at Oxford, and to Englishmen Serbia is no longer an unknown land.<sup>17</sup>

If one studies the major policy shifts of Britain during World War II—from an all out support for the young Yugoslavian king, who fled German occupation to England; to sponsoring the resistance of the *Cetniks* led by General Mikhailovic, the pro-royalty fighter; to abandoning that group, in favor of Tito's Partisans, and eventually forcing the king to dismiss Mikhailovic—one is surprised by the British turn about, effected by Winston Churchill personally, who even committed his own son, Randolph, to be parachuted over Tito-controlled territory, and channeled considerable British aid through him to the Partisans, as recounted in Churchill's war memoirs.<sup>18</sup> Obviously, even though Tito was a Croat in origin, he perhaps thought that Serbs, who were rebellious and famously not distinguished for their docility to foreign invaders, since they had resisted Ottoman rule and repulsed on many occasions the Austro-Hungarian forces that had tried to quell them on the southern front of World War I, would be amenable to resist the Germans. At that time, the pro-Nazi Ustasha state was established over Croat and Bosnian territory, immediately after the German occupation in 1941, and became by definition hostile to Serbia and the Serbs. Indeed, it did not take long for that state to establish extermination camps in Croatia, Bosnia, and the island of Pag, where major centers of physical elimination of Serbs, Jews, and Gypsies were built, preceding the Nazi camps in Germany and Eastern Europe that were to provide the facilities for the final solution. The major camp complexes in Jadovno and Jasenovac were proof of Ustasha determination to carry out their widely circulated slogan: kill a third (of the Serbs in Ustasha territory), expel a third, and convert a third. We are talking