

INTRODUCTION

Srebrenica is located in the central part of the Western Balkans, on the border between the Republic Srpska (Bosnia and Herzegovina) and the Republic of Serbia. It is surrounded by the mountain ranges of Kvarc and Karaula, and partly leans to the left bank of the Drina River. Therefore the whole region, including Srebrenica, is called the Central Podrinje.

Srebrenica is mentioned for the first time in historical sources under this name on August 16th 1352, in a document from Dubrovnik¹. This name was given without doubt after the rich mines of silver that were exploited in this period and about which we found the testimonies in much older periods. Namely, even in the ancient times in today's Sase settlement was a settlement called *Domavia* and the entire area was named *Argentarius*, which means silver. The exploitation of silver and lead ore was common in this area even in the 1st and 2nd century. In this period *Domavia* had the status of *victus*, which would mean a smaller settlement, but at the beginning of the following century *Domavia* became a *manicipium*. In the middle of the 3rd century *Domavia* gained the status of *colonia* and thus became one of the most important centers of the Balkan area and administrative mining center for Dalmatia and Pannonia. From the period of late antiquity (5th and 6th centuries) in this area were found the remains of the early Christian basilicas in Skelani and Staroglavice.²

The parlous period of the national migration left its mark on this important mining center of the Roman Empire. With the arrival of the Slavs to the Balkans, *Domavia* was demolished and overthrown and only in the 14th century did this area start renewing its original significance, now within the medieval Serbian states. The rebuilding of mining in Serbian countries is closely related to the arrival of Saxon miners who arrived in Serbian lands in the mid-13th century. As skilled miners Sax-

1 *Река Дрина и Подриње* (River Drina and Podrinje), group of authors, Belgrade, 2000, p. 246.

2 Zeljko Teofilovic, *Православље у Сребреници* (Orthodoxy in Srebrenica), Srebrenica, 2010, p. 11.

ons brought some mining skills to this region, which in the social life resulted in the ascent of cities, the development of crafts and the consequent and significant increase in the revenues of the rulers.

If we watch Srebrenica through this prism we will see that it was elevated above the other mining centers in the country during the reign of Ban Stjepan II Kotromanic³, because when compared to others it brought in up to three times higher incomes. Under its influence in this period other centers such as Zvonik (now Zvornik) were developed. In 1390, Srebrenica mines yielded 850 liters of pure silver and Srebrenica had approximately 40,000 inhabitants in this period, while, for example, in the same period, Rome had only about 15,000 inhabitants.⁴ During the first few decades of the 15th century Srebrenica recorded steady growth. In 1412, Srebrenica entered the Serbian Despotate, and only five years later it had a mint facility. During this period in the Despot Stefan Lazarevic's⁵ state were the two most important mining centers of that time, Novo Brdo and Srebrenica, from which he collected an annual income of 250,000 ducats. The significance of Srebrenica for the despot Stefan was also illustrated by the fact that in 1426 he convened the National Assembly in which he appointed his cousin Djuradj Brankovic as his successor.⁶

One year after Srebrenica became part of Despotate, in 1413, Despot Stefan built a church with a personal prayer room for himself. In addition to this temple in the vicinity of Srebrenica, there was also a monastery of the Holy Trinity in the Sase settlement, which rise is related to the King Stefan Uros. In the developed mining period this monastery also had medical doctors in charge of treating miners.⁷ The Ottoman penetration into the Balkans affected also the development of Srebrenica.

The Turks first conquered it in 1439, but it was returned five years later. In this period, until its final fall under Turkish rule, Srebrenica changed its master several times, which certainly influenced its development.

Under Turkish rule Srebrenica fell two years before the final fall of the medieval Bosnian state. The fall of the Serbian countries under Ottoman rule, in addition to the change of the state, brought about significant social changes that had far-reaching consequences. They were conditioned by the nature of the Ottomans style of feudalism that differed from the European style in the fact that there were no seigneurs in the Ottoman system with ownership rights on the land, but they could only enjoy the rights and privileges of the land. This essentially meant that in the

3 One of the most important rulers of the medieval Bosnian state. Ruled from 1322 to 1353.

4 *Река Дрина и Подриње*, group of authors, Belgrade, 2000, p. 249.

5 Despot Stefan Lazarevic (1377 – 1427) was the ruler of Serbia with the title of duke (more precisely knyaz) from 1389 to 1427 and with the title of despot from 1402 to 1427

6 Zeljko Teofilovic, *Православље у Сребреници*, Srebrenica, 2010, p. 26–30.

7 *Православни манастири у Босни и Херцеговини* (Orthodox monasteries in Bosnia and Herzegovina), Belgrade, 2008, p. 130.

Ottoman Empire there was no nobility as we know it in European countries of the same period, who could have demanded the constraints of the monarch's authority, but on the contrary, the Ottoman seigneurs were directly related to the will of the rulers. At the same time, during this period of weakening of the central government, the representatives of this rank resorted to violence in order to, at the expense of the peasantry, and in these areas Orthodox Serbs represented the peasantry, increase their wealth.

On the other hand, the Ottoman Empire brought to Europe a completely new, Islamic religion. Within the Ottoman Empire, thoroughly saturated with the Islamic doctrine, besides social, there was a religious gradation of the population. Members of the Islamic religion were in a privileged position, while members of the Christian and Jewish faith represented only a tolerated part of the population. For these reasons, but also because of the violence that was not rare, especially during periods of the weakening of the Ottoman Empire, forced religious conversions of Christian Serbs to Islam were a common phenomenon, which in the long run had enormous consequences for the development of social relations in all Serbian countries.

The role of the Ottoman occupation in Srebrenica can be seen from the scarce data on changes in the field of mining, which has resulted in changes in society. As Srebrenica was the most important mining center of this region, all the economic life in the city was most dependent on mining. Thus, immediately after the conquest of the Ottomans, Srebrenica gained the status of a *nahiye*⁸, and shortly afterwards it became the seat of the *kadiluk*⁹. The Srebrenica mine belonged to the imperial *hass*¹⁰. Only fifteen years after the occupation of Srebrenica, in 1477, the miners lost their privileged status and were ranked the same as ordinary peasantry, which resulted in many leaving. For example, in 1519, 28 miners worked in the Sase mine, and the mine generated a revenue of 220,000 akces, while less than fifteen years later, in 1533, the same mine had 17 miners, with an annual income of 103,200 akces. By 1559, there was a mint facility in Srebrenica.¹¹

Ottoman conquests have introduced significant changes to both the social life and structure of the population. As we see from the *defter*¹² from 1533, in Srebrenica everything was still subordinated to mining, only now the bearers of city life have become Muslims for who was explicitly said they were not engaged in agriculture. Up to this period there were also no significant changes in the religious structure of the population.

8 *Nahiye* – a lower administrative unit in the Ottoman Empire

9 *Kadiluk* - judicial and administrative area in the Ottoman Empire. Several *nahiye* made up one *kadiluk*.

10 *Imperial hass* - land or economic goods within the Ottoman Empire which revenues belonged directly to the sultan

11 Zeljko Teofilovic, *Православље у Сребреници*, Srebrenica, 2010, p. 49

12 *Defter* - cadastral tax register in the Ottoman Empire

According to the same defter, 576 taxable households were registered in Srebrenica and the surrounding area, which consisted of 12 settlements, of which 81 were Muslim and 495 were Christian. In Srebrenica alone, 36 Muslim households were registered, in comparison to 178 Christian households. Despite this kind of religious structure of the population, Srebrenica in this period began to get the outlines of an oriental city, and the Muslim population was in a privileged political and social position in relation to Christians.

Over the next decade and a half, the structure of the population had changed even more. According to the data provided by the defter from 1548, there were 106 Muslim households registered in Srebrenica, which means that the number of Muslims in the city almost tripled, but Christians remained a majority. In this period, in addition to the Christian majority, Srebrenica, on the wings of the privileged position of the Muslims, is rapidly developing into a Muslim city center. After more than half a century, as it can be seen from the defter from 1604, the religious structure of the population in Srebrenica had drastically changed in favor of the Muslim population, which in the following centuries remained unchanged. With this defter in Srebrenica there were registered 182 Muslim households, compared to 151 Christian households. It is hard to imagine that the almost progressive growth of the Muslim population at the end of the 15th century and in the first half of the 16th century, despite the differences in the social situation, was the natural reaction of the local population to the presence of a new religion, and that without violence, within one generation during only 15 years, the number of Muslim population had tripled.¹³

In the same period in which the progressive growth of the Muslim population was recorded, the significance of Srebrenica gradually declined, so that by the end of the 16th century it became an economically and politically insignificant environment. An additional blow to Srebrenica accrued during the Vienna War, at the end of the seventeenth century, when the Turks pulling themselves in front of the Holy Alliance troops burned it to the ground. In this period Christian churches that survived the period of Turkish conquest of this region were burnt down. The population was largely displaced in areas on the right bank of the Drina River. This great fire created an oriental kasaba settlement from Srebrenica and sealed its economic development forever, while the political significance of this area was restored during the period of the Balkan policy creation by the Austro-Hungarian monarchy.

Bosnia and Herzegovina, and consequently Srebrenica, came under Austro-Hungarian rule in 1878 after the Berlin Congress¹⁴ of Great Powers. Namely, along with the decline in the power of the Ottoman Empire after the Vienna War, liberation movements in the Balkans grew. The most persistent and most effective

13 Compare: Adem Handzic, *Studije o Bosni*, Istanbul, 1994, p. 54; Nedim Filipovic, *Islamicizacija u Bosni i Hercegovini*, Tesanj, 2005, p. 196–198.

14 Congress of Great European Powers held in Berlin on the occasion of the Great East Crisis in the period from June the 13th to July the 13th 1878.

was the Serbian national movement that in the beginning of the nineteenth century, in two national uprisings¹⁵, succeeded in freeing the territory of the Pashalik of Belgrade from the Ottoman authorities. Following this example, uprisings were raised also in other Serb countries that were under Ottoman occupation. The most significant was the uprising that first erupted in Herzegovina in 1875, and then in Bosnia, covering mainly the Bosnian Krajina area. With Serbia entering into the war and then also Russia, the Great Eastern Crisis arose because of which the great powers in Berlin convened a congress. At this congress, the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina was handed over to the Austro-Hungarian monarchy while these countries nominally remained under the Sultan's sovereignty.

The Austro-Hungarian occupation of Bosnia and Herzegovina came as a result of a thoroughly elaborated political doctrine, relying on the ideas of Cesare Balbo¹⁶, who in 1844 suggested to the Habsburgs to advance to the east through the Balkans. And indeed, after the unification of Italy and Germany, but also the redefinition of the internal structure, the Monarchy as the only way of expansion, saw the breakthrough to the east through the Balkans. A young independent Serbian state stood on that road, while Bosnia and Herzegovina was supposed to serve as a springboard.¹⁷

Bosnia and Herzegovina were kinds of *corpus separatum* within the dual system of state governance over which the Joint Ministry of Finance held the authority. The basic idea of Minister Benjamin von Kallay¹⁸, who had ruled Bosnia and Herzegovina for about three decades, was to isolate these countries as much as possible from the young Serbian states of Serbia and Montenegro, and to form in them a unique Bosnian/Bosniak identity.¹⁹ To realize this idea, the most suitable associates were the remains of the Muslim bey realm, who, given that the Muslim population was not the majority in the country, could retain a social and political primacy over land ownership. Therefore, in Bosnia and Herzegovina the agrarian reform was not carried out, which enabled these principalities to remain in the feudal social order until the end of the Austro-Hungarian administration.²⁰

As the formation of a unified Bosnian nation simultaneously meant suppression and denial of other national identities, this policy was resisted by the political and intellectual elite of the Serbian people, the most numerous in the country then. The propagation of this idea was first made in the journal *Vatan* (Homeland), which

15 The first Serbian uprising in 1804 and the Second Serbian Uprising in 1815.

16 Cesare Balbo (1789-1853) - an Italian writer, politician, political thinker and fighter for the unification of Italy.

17 Milorad Ekmecic, *Дуго кретање између клања и орања*, Belgrade, 2008, p. 317.

18 Benjamin von Kallay (1839-1903) - Hungarian historian and politician. He performed various duties in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, and the most important one was the joint minister of finance and the governor of Bosnia and Herzegovina in the period from 1882 to 1903.

19 Tomislav Kraljacic, *Kalajev režim u Bosni i Hercegovini (1882–1903)*, Sarajevo, 1987, p. 99–149.

20 Ibid, p. 499–508.

was being published also in the Turkish language since 1884. The journal was in 1897 renamed *Rehber* (Roadmap). The aim of this journal was to tie the Muslims of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the Monarchy in order to be the bearers of the new nation.²¹ Another newsletter with the same goal was the “*Bošnjak*” (Bosniak) newspaper founded by Mehmed-beg Kapetanovic²². His idea went towards spreading awareness that all the inhabitants of Bosnia and Herzegovina were Bosniaks, but that the Bosnian bey realm as the heir of the Bogomil and the Bosnian consciousness of the Pre-Roman period should have a primacy. In the first issue of “*Bošnjak*” from 1891 a song was published by the author Safvet-bey Basagic²³, which symbolically became a kind of program base for the Bosniak nation: “Don’t you know Bosniak, it was not long ago/ Less than fifteen summers I vow/ When in our proud Bosnia/ And heroic country Herzegovina/ From Trebinje to Brodskijeh door/ There were no Serbs or Croats/ And today, through their capriciousness/ Both foreigners in their spread/ Both guests have overwhelmed us/ To take away our holiest treasure/ Our name proud and pleased”. Such a program, that proclaimed the most numerous and authentic population and their cultural identity in the country as foreigners and occupiers, remained in power until the end of the Austro-Hungarian administration, and as a political relapse it spilled through Muslim political thought throughout the twentieth century. In order to promote the Muslim bey realm as the heir and guardian of the Pre-Bosnian Bosnian tradition, in 1888 the National Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina was formed. Its first administrator was Kosta Herman²⁴, a state official who published the same year a two-volume edition *Folk Songs of Mohammedans in Bosnia and Herzegovina*.²⁵ In this period, the first institutionalized misuses of historical and archaeological heritage were starting, directed at the historic legitimization of the new nation, but at the same time the erasing of the Serbian cultural identity in this territory. All these measures found its full expression in the persecutions of Serbs during the First World War, when, by banning the use of Cyrillic, banning the use of national symbols and celebration of the family saint feast (*Krsna slava*)²⁶, was made an attempt to destroy some of the basic elements of Serbian identity in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

21 Ibid, p. 187–188.

22 Mehmed-beg Kapetanovic (1839-1902) - a Muslim writer, politician and one of the ideologues of the Bosniak nation.

23 Safvet-beg Basagic (1870-1934) - a Muslim poet, politician and historian.

24 Kosta Herman (1850-1921) - high official of the Austro-Hungarian occupation authority in Bosnia and Herzegovina

25 Tomislav Kraljic, *Kalajev režim u Bosni i Hercegovini (1882–1903)*, Sarajevo, 1987, p. 198–199.

26 Family feast *Krsna slava* - the church-folk tradition and, after Christmas and Easter, the most important family feast for the Serbs, which is always related to the celebration of a particular Christian saint. *Krsna slava* is one of the most important identity marks of the Serbian people and as such it was entered into the register of the intangible cultural heritage of UNESCO in 2014.

In addition to these moves at the state level, the Austro-Hungarian authorities also carried out the colonization of the population in areas such as the Bosnian Krajina where the Serbian population had an almost two-thirds majority, but also in the border regions towards Serbia and Montenegro so that the single national area would be crossed by territories inhabited by non-Serbs population. Yet in 1872 Count Andrassy²⁷ advised his deputy in Sarajevo to suggest to the Ottoman authorities to inhabit the Muslim and Roman Catholic population in the valley of the Drina River. Andrassy was probably relying on the previous experience from one decade earlier when the Ottoman Empire, during the emigration of Muslims from Serbia, settled this population in the border areas along the Drina and Sava rivers.

Such an Austro-Hungarian policy, which meant changing the national structure of the population along the border with Serbia, found a full expression in the period of World War I. Since 1906 in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy's military circles it had been decided that any future attack on Serbia must go through the Drina, although this direction was incomparably less favorable than the one across the Sava and the Danube. At the heart of this decision was the political goal to prevent the possible Serbian uprising in Bosnia and Herzegovina on the one hand and, on the other hand, to use the situation in which the population would be at the moment when Podrinje became an area of direct military operations to persecute the Serb population. That's exactly what happened. When the Austro-Hungarian army retreated after the defeat on Cer Mountain²⁸, the basic task of the *Schutzkorps*²⁹ was to not allow the Serbian population from Podrinje to retreat with the army to central Bosnia. When the Austro-Hungarian counter-offensive followed and the withdrawal of the Serbian army from Bosnia, the *Schutzkorps* forced by violence a considerable part of the Serbian population to withdraw with the Serbian army on the right bank of the Drina River. This behavior during the First World War became a kind of pattern for later periods.

It is interesting to note that inter-ethnic relations from the period of the First World War on the local level, conditionally said, were almost transplanted into the period of the Second World War. Where there were the *Schutzkorps* in the First World War, during the Second World War the population was very much in favor of the

27 Andrassy Gyula (1823-1890) - Hungarian and Austro-Hungarian politician. From 1871 to 1879, he served as the Prime Minister of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy.

28 Cer – a mountain in western Serbia, where the Serbian Army won the first allied victory in the First World War in August 1914.

29 *Schutzkorps* - Protective military detachments in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. Their specificity in BiH was reflected in the fact that they consisted of Muslim and Croat volunteers. One of the basic purposes of these units was to disable the possible Serbian uprising, which resulted in mass crimes against Serbs mainly in the border areas towards Serbia and Montenegro, that is, in Herzegovina and Podrinje.

state project of persecuting Serbs in the Independent State of Croatia³⁰. At the same time, in the areas where there was a strong movement of green cadres made up of Serbs who did not respond to Austro-Hungarian mobilization during the First World War, strong anti-Nazi uprising strongholds emerged during the Second World War.

The interwar period between the two world wars, when it comes to the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina, was marked by the agrarian reform, which finally degraded the remains of the Ottoman beys' realm in these areas. On the other hand, the most important issue on which the fate of the Kingdom of SCS/Yugoslavia largely depended was the Croatian issue. Namely, the interwar period was at the same time the period in which Croatian nationalism was moving from elite to a mass type. Emerging on the ideological foundations of the Croatian Party of Rights, according to which the Croatian state had the right to territories that at any time belonged to the Hungarian crown, and on which only the Croatian political people could exist, Croatian nationalism passed through several phases. The first phase, which encompassed the period until the end of the nineteenth century, was marked by the formulation and promotion of ideas in the circles of a deficient middle class and a part of pupil and student youth. The second phase encompasses the period from the beginning of the twentieth century to the end of the First World War and that is the period of the coalition of the Party of Rights with the Croatian clerics, which resulted in the descent of formulated national ideologies to the people and the incorporation of rightist ideas into the political programs of all political parties that sought to establish an independent Croatian state. The third period was the struggle for the separation of "Croatian countries" from the Kingdom of SCS/ Yugoslavia and the formation of the Croatian state. The bearer of Croatian nationalism in this period was the Croatian peasant party.

Representatives of the Ottoman beys realm who were degraded with agrarian reform and who gathered mainly in the Yugoslav Muslim organization, after the death of its founder and longtime president Mehmed Spah began to approach the Croatian Peasant Party in order to regain economic and political status in the new Croatian state and almost as a rule formed its right oriented wing. This is how we got a kind of fusion of two ideologies that saw the realization of their goals in the disappearance of the Kingdom of the SHS/Yugoslavia.

30 Independent State of Croatia, as one of the most reliable satellite countries of the Third Reich, encompassed the territory of today's Republic of Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and part of the territory of the Republic of Serbia (Srem region to Zemun). It emerged as an expression of Hitler's interest in the permanent disintegration of Yugoslavia as a state, but also as an expression of the continued radicalization of the Croatian question in the Kingdom of SCS/ Yugoslavia. It was formed by members of the terrorist organization Ustasha, formed in 1930 and supported by revisionist countries, Hungary and Italy. One of the basic goals of the Ustasha organization that was implemented during the existence of this state was the destruction of the Serbian people, who made up one third of its total population.

The historical sanctuary both ideologies found in the Independent State of Croatia, which was founded on April the 10th 1941 by the Ustasha³¹, the most radical representatives of the rightist ideology³². The emergence of the new Croatian state under the historical conditions of the new order led by Nazi Germany was taken as an opportunity to resolve the Serbian issue once and for all on the “Croatian historical territory” by a well-rounded rightist ideology. At the very beginning, the Serbs were again prohibited from using the national script³³, their faith was renamed, their movement was limited, and along with that racial laws were adopted by which Serbs could be convicted of the most serious offenses only on the basis of the assumption³⁴. After several months, a period which was necessary to form a central and local part of the government, the action of the physical destruction of the Serbian people began. It is important to know that Jews and Roma shared the same fate in this area.

The extent to which the destruction of the Serbian people was important to the Ustasha authorities of the Independent State of Croatia is also reflected in the fact that, at the very beginning of the existence of this country, a pre-war idea about the

31 Ustasha - a Croatian terrorist organization founded in Italy in 1921 by a group of Croatian right-wing politicians. Until the outbreak of the Second World War it was supported by Italy and Hungary. The Ustashes sought to establish a Croatian state in which there would be only a place for Croats. Their ideology was deeply embedded with Serbo-phobia and anti-Semitism. After the Nazi Germany's aggression against the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, after the capitulation of the Army of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, the Ustashes, under Hitler's patronage, founded the NDH in which the Holocaust and genocides against the Serbs and Roma were committed.

32 The Croatian Party of Rights inherits the political tradition of the Party of Rights which is formed in 1861 by Ante Starcevic and Eugen Kvaternik. From the political program of this party has emerged a rightist ideology, which was based on the serbofobia and the project of Great Croatia. Rightist ideology is the synthesis of two pre-modern ideas, the idea of Croatian state and historical law and the idea of the Croatian political nation. It signifies, in short, the ideology within which it was considered that the future Croatian state should include territories that at any time and in any way were parts of the Hungarian crown, in which only one, Croatian political nation can live. By the end of the 19th century, rightist movement was limited only to a part of citizens and high school youth. In the beginning of the 20th century, which is marked with a significant presence of liberal ideas among student youth who studied abroad, rightist movement in response to the ever-increasing liberalization of society entered into a coalition with clerical political options and through the clergy became a red thread of the nationalism transition process from the elite to the mass type. In the period between the two wars, Croatian rightist movement became the content of the Ustasha terrorist organization. During the Second World War, with the creation of the Independent State of Croatia, the rightist idea of Croatian statehood was realized, in which was committed the genocide against the Serbian people.

See more at: Dusan Beric, *Хрватско праваштво и Срби*, Novi Sad, 2005; Vasilije Krestic, *Геноцидом до велике Хрватске*, Jagodina, 2002.

33 See Annex, No. 3, p. 294, „*Zakonska odredba o zabrani cirilice*“, *Narodne novine*, 25. 04. 1941.

34 See Annex, No. 2, p. 293, „*Zakonska odredba za odbranu naroda i države*“, *Narodne novine*, 11-12. 04. 1941.

establishment of three state centers, one of which would be located in Banja Luka, came to the realization stage. This plan stipulated that Zagreb remained a cultural center, Banja Luka an administrative center, while Jajce was to take on the role of a military center in the NDH (ISC). The seriousness of such ideas is reflected in the fact that already in May 1941 the seat of the Deputy Prime Minister of the NDH(ISC), Osman Kulenovic³⁵, was transferred from Zagreb to Banja Luka. This division was not a product of some current interest, but it was a thoroughly thought-out plan. This testimony is found in Alojzije Stepinac's³⁶ Diaries, who in a conversation with Vladko Macek³⁷ in 1939 talks about the need to colonize northwestern Bosnia. If we know that the Bosanska Krajina area is the only area in Bosnia and Herzegovina with a two-thirds majority of Serbs, it becomes clear the ultimate goal of this idea.

As the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina became part of the ISC, the Muslim leaders also announced the idea of its autonomous status, in which the results of social processes from the period of the Kingdom of SHS/Yugoslavia would be annulled, while at the same time would be reaffirmed social relations from the pre-Yugoslav period that would regain them the status of the ruling class in the country.³⁸ Based on such formulated interests, but also because of the already acquired odium towards the Serbs as bearers of the Yugoslavian idea, most of the Muslim political elite put themselves at the disposal of the new state.³⁹ Later on, when it became clear that Muslims in the NDH (ISC) would not get autonomy, a number of Muslim politicians demanded the autonomy of Bosnia and Herzegovina under the protectorate of the Third Reich.⁴⁰

As already mentioned, the domestic Muslim and Croat population were mostly interested in the implementation of the state policy of destroying Serbs in those areas where the *Schutzkorps* operated during the First World War.⁴¹ We can see the results of this operation held during the Second World War in Srebrenica from part of the conclusion from the study by the author who dealt with this issue.

35 See Annex, No. 7, p. 302, Osman Kulenovic in front of the current President Palace, Museum of Genocide Victims, Belgrade

36 Alojzije Stepinac (1898-1960) - the Archbishop of Zagreb and the Cardinal. During the Second World War he supported the proclamation of the NDH and invited the faithful to cooperate with the authorities of the new state. In October 1946, he was convicted as a war criminal and associate of the occupier. The period until his death he spent in home detention on his private estate.

37 Vladko Macek (1879-1964) - a Croatian politician and from 1928 to 1941, the leader of the Croatian Peasant Party, the most influential Croatian political party in the period between the two wars.

38 See Annex, No. 6, p. 301, Personal ID of the member of the 13th SS *Handschar* Division, Military Archive, Prague

39 See Annex, No. 4, p. 296, Invitation of Ustasha Mufti to Muslim Ustashes, Zagreb 1943

40 Enver Redzic, *Muslimansko autonomaštvo i 13. SS divizija*, Sarajevo, 1987

41 See Annex, No. 5, p. 298, Report against Muslims, "Wild Ustasha"

“According to the documents of the FNNRY, National Commission for the Investigation of Crimes, the Ustashas (mainly consisting of local Muslims because only a hundred Croats lived in this county – A/N) in Srebrenica county in the period between 1941 and 1945 killed 1,076 adult males, 546 women, 210 elderly and 430 children, totaling 2,262 victims. Apart from the rare exceptions, all the victims of this Ustasha terror were Serb Orthodox. This means that over 2,200 Serbs were killed in Srebrenica County during the Second World War, but this figure is not final, because not all victims are registered and especially small children and infants who had not yet received their name, and thus were not on the list of victims. Of the total number of all civilian victims from Srebrenica County in the Second World War (3281), the Orthodox Serbs who suffered at the hands of the Ustashas were about 68% of this number, which means more than two thirds of all victims.”⁴²

Due to the proclaimed ideology of fraternity and unity of the new communist Yugoslavia with Tito as its head, the extremely bloody historical heritage of the Second World War was euphemized so that victims of the genocide committed against Serbs suddenly became victims of fascist terror. This attitude towards the war inheritance has caused the existence of parallel “truths” about the war; a phenomenon that kept the population of these areas in a latent conflict that broke into parallel processes in the breakdown and collapse of socialist Yugoslavia, which largely determined the character and the manner of warfare.

The Serbian people, and so those in Podrinje, experienced the categories of massive expulsion, killing and imprisonment yet at the beginning of the 20th century. The continuum of the crimes committed in the context of the invasive activities of the great powers and committed mainly by members of the peoples’ neighbors during the First World War was manifested by the desire to clean this region ethnically and to separate the Serbian ethnic body from the left and the right side of the Drina. A special upgrade of the severity and volume these crimes gained during the period of genocide against Serbs in the NDH (ISC) from 1941 to 1945. Various expeditions by the pro-Nazi Ustashas’ black legions, Muslim militia, the Muslim 13th SS *Handschar* Division, but also the destructive warpaths of the local Muslim population, confronted the Serbian people in these areas with the danger of their physical disappearance.

42 Draga Mastilovic „Покољ Срба у Сребреници у Другом свјетском рату“, in: Јасеновац, геноцид и злочини Независне Државе Хрватске над Србима, Јеврејима и Ромима у Другом свјетском рату, Зборник саопштења и сјећања на Шестој међународној конференцији, Бања Лука – Доња Градина, 2014.